

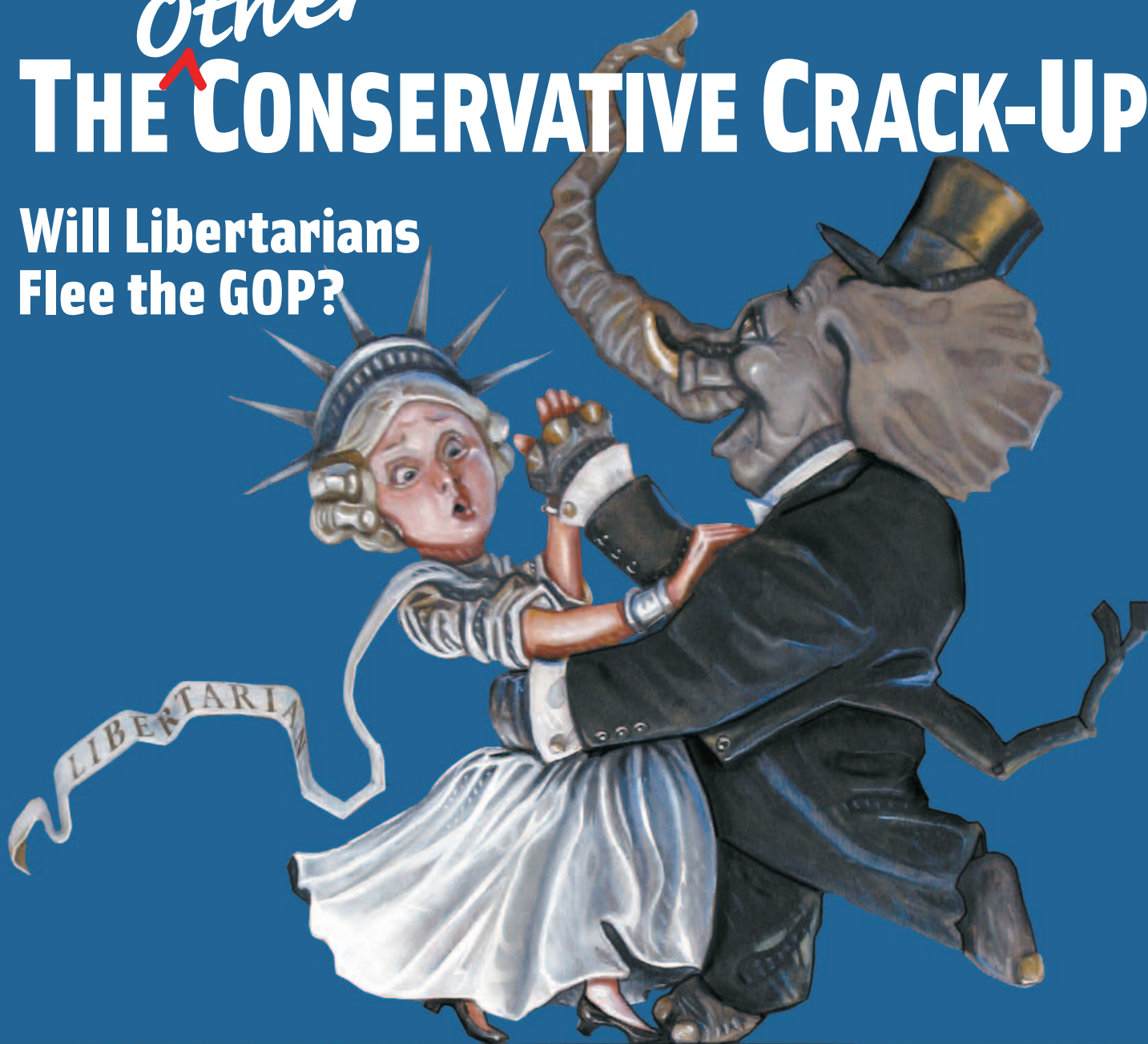
HARRIES ON BURKE - HITCHENS ON PRISONS

NOVEMBER 17, 2003

# The American Conservative

## *other* THE CONSERVATIVE CRACK-UP

Will Libertarians  
Flee the GOP?



GRAND OLD PARTY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHRIS HIERS



[ COVER ]

## The (Other) Conservative Crack-Up

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III As the Republican Party embraces big government and big war, will libertarians leave the Cold War coalition? Page 8

[ IDEAS ]

## What Conservatism Means

BY OWEN HARRIES What today's conservatives should have learned from Edmund Burke—but didn't Page 13

[ BELTWAY ]

## Most Favored Democracy

BY DANIEL MCCARTHY The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies works to define Sharon's interests as America's. Page 17

[ CULTURE ]

## Turn Off, Wake Up

BY JENNY SCHROEDEL A Gen Xer puts down her remote and embraces real life. Page 20

### COLUMNS

**7** Patrick J. Buchanan: Culture War to the Death

**31** Taki: Slander and Its Uses

### NEWS & VIEWS

**4** Fourteen Days: *L'Affaire* Easterbrook; Rummy's Second Thoughts; Lonely Homecoming; Red Ink Conservatives

**19** Deep Background: George Tenet, Human Shield; West Wing Disarray; Neocons in High Places

### ARTICLES

**12** Dana B. Vachon: Lighting up in Bloomberg's New York

**22** Paul Craig Roberts: The War Party's first-use doctrine

### ARTS & LETTERS

**23** Steve Sailer: Cate Blanchett plays Veronica Guerin.

**24** Steve Sailer: *Human Accomplishment* by Charles Murray

**26** Peter Hitchens: *Harsh Justice* by James Q. Whitman

**29** Harold O.J. Brown: *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* by George M. Marsden

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIERS

[POSTWAR]

## IF A TREE FALLS ...

The Founders believed a free press to be so necessary for self-government that they listed it among the first of our enumerated rights. After all, how else could citizens know enough to hold their representatives accountable? The young Republic depended on newspapers and journals, but today television is king. Alluding perhaps to Marshall McLuhan's famous insight, "The medium is the message," commentator Christopher Manion writes, "If it's not on TV, it didn't happen."

Manion's unsettling foray into media metaphysics follows a *Washington Post* report that the Pentagon has disallowed the filming of soldiers' coffins returning from Iraq. Our gallant troops leave no man behind, but a grateful nation can no longer welcome home the fallen.

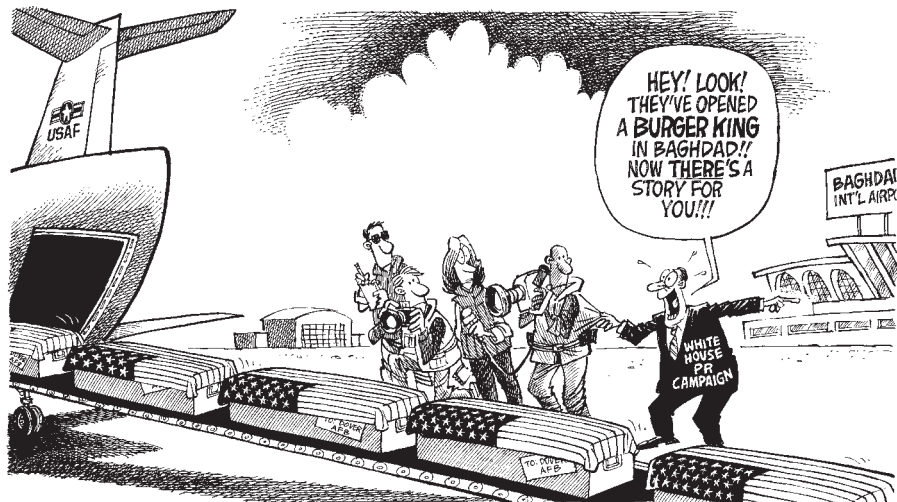
The political calculus is savvy. Former Joint Chiefs Chairman Hugh Shelton has called one criterion for military intervention "the Dover test," after the military's principal mortuary and the country's tolerance for casualties. Good politicians don't forget that body counts on the nightly news once helped turn Middle America against the war in Vietnam.

When the deaths are concrete, it becomes harder to justify a war by abstractions, be they "domino theory" and "credibility" or "democracy" and "liberation." For now, the administration's Iraq policy polls well, but voters have yet to see up close those 18-year-olds who will never be 19, those sons who will never be fathers. The darkened cameras deprive them of the *lacrimae rerum*—"the tears for passing things"—that since Vergil's day have marked the cost of empire.

[NEOCONS]

## SECOND THOUGHTS

We now know from the famous leaked memo that Donald Rumsfeld's sunny public assessments of the situation in



JEFF PARKER www.caglecartoons.com

Iraq is but a brave façade, and the inner Rumsfeld entertains deep private misgivings about the war he pushed for. How very Robert McNamara like!

It has long been clear that Iraq was not a logical enemy in the War on Terror. President Bush's invasion has turned a country that was not previously a terrorist problem into one. Now the U.S. has 150,000 troops tied down with no end in sight, zero prospect of turning Iraq into a pro-Western democracy, an annual cost nearing \$100 billion, and the contempt of much of the world. Now the man perhaps most responsible for selling the war to an inexperienced president is having second thoughts.

We wonder if Rumsfeld is also having doubts about the coterie of neocons he imported to staff the upper echelons of the Pentagon, many of whom were pushing for an American invasion of Iraq long before 9/11 provided an impetus. Might he now be wondering whether Douglas Feith, who had been advising Israel's Likud Party on how to scuttle the Mideast peace process, is really the best person to shape American foreign policy? Or Paul Wolfowitz, author of blueprints of American world domination that earned ridicule and deserved it. The questions Rumsfeld is asking now

are good and necessary. Of course they should have been asked long before the invasion and addressed to a staff of broader ideological range.

[HOLLYWOOD]

## PASSION PLAY

Bloody fare like "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" poses no problem for Hollywood, but a film like "The Passion" is another matter. Major studios blanched at distributing the movie, and so director Mel Gibson is hiring an independent distribution company, Newmarket Films. According to the *LA Times*, Gibson realized that even if a big distributor wanted to pick up the film, it probably would not be able to stand up to the campaign of defamation that might follow.

Not that Hollywood heavies are always so squeamish about controversial religious themes. Disney-owned Miramax—which reportedly passed on "The Passion"—was not especially reluctant to distribute "Dogma" and "Priest," two films deeply offensive to Christians. Promiscuity, gore, and blasphemy are apparently fine, but the faith that millions hold dear is just too delicate. We suspect, however, that Gibson's film will succeed even without the Left Coast's imprimatur.



[CULTURE]

## TICK TOCK

Rather than plotting showers and picking names, her friends were horrified by the baby news. “This is your future, the rest of your life. Don’t throw it all away.” “They ruin your life. It’s never going to be about you again.”

But Molly Jong-Fast isn’t a pregnant teen worried she’ll miss the prom. She’s a well-educated 24-year old with a famous mother, a fiancé, an agent, and access to the pages of the *New York Times*. In a recent piece, she recalled that when she told her Birkin-bagger friends that she’s expecting, they spent no shock on her unmarried status but fretted instead that she’d damage her career—or worse, not have one at all.

“I used to think I would have my first child at 41,” she speculated. But on the edge of motherhood, she doesn’t feel the loss her peers bemoan. There’s a shift underway—thank Bridget Jones—among career women who spent their 20s making it and their 30s parked in corner offices losing out to their biological clocks. According to a January 2002 report by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, female fertility begins to decline in late 20s and drops significantly after age 35. By the time she reaches her 40s, a woman’s odds of having a baby are less than 10 percent. Have-it-all girls are getting that memo, and while some still sound like Jong-Fast’s friends, many more share her concern, “I’m not scared of what I might miss ... because another fear has trumped it: being 10 years older and not having a child.” It may be too soon to write the West’s obituary.

[BUDGET]

## RED INK CONSERVATIVES

September was good for the U.S. Treasury. But even that month’s \$26 billion surplus closed the fiscal year with a

deficit double that of the previous year: \$374 billion. Lockbox chatter about surpluses—\$281 billion when George W. Bush took office—now seems quite distant.

In 1984, then Representative Dick Cheney (R-Wyo.) said, “The continued failure of the administration to deal with the deficit puts at risk everything Ronald Reagan believes in.” Ditto John Snow, now Treasury Secretary, who in 1995 said, “The budget deficit ... threatens the very foundation of our culture.” But the current administration, of which both are part—the same administration pushing a \$400 billion prescription drug plan—seems less concerned about red ink.

In appearances on “Meet the Press,” Snow told Tim Russert, “If you’re going to run a deficit, this is the time to do it. ... The deficit we have is manageable,” and Cheney shrugged, “We’ve always made exceptions for recession, national emergency, time of war.” But the war looks open-ended, and Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin estimates that unless spending slows or tax cuts are rolled back, the deficit could surpass the record set in 1986.

Predictably, Democrats’ favorite villain is tax relief, but with Americans now working until July to fund the government, few should be eager to increase its allowance. The problem is not that we’re paying too little, but that they’re spending too much to feed a Cerberus mongrel of big government and big war.

[MEDIA]

## IMPARTIALITY

On Oct. 21, the Senate finally voted to ban partial-birth abortion—or, rather, in the words of the *Washington Post*, “what abortion foes call a ‘partial-birth’ procedure.” Bias posing as ersatz objectivity, though common in its pages, is by no

means unique to the *Post*. The *Chicago Tribune* caused a minor scandal in early September when it printed a letter from Illinois Right to Life executive director Bill Beckman—but changed “pro-life” to “anti-abortion” every time the phrase appeared.

Behind each case almost certainly lies a stylebook decree similar to the one in force at the *New York Times*. On the abortion question, the *Times Manual of Style* instructs: “For the sake of neutrality, avoid *pro-life* and *pro-choice* ... Impartial terms include *abortion rights advocate* and *anti-abortion campaigner* ... *Anti-abortion* is an undisputed modifier, but *pro-abortion* raises objections ... *woman* and *fetus* are more neutral terms than *mother* (for a pregnant woman) and *baby* (for a fetus).”

The mainstream press’s bias against human life is both myopic and, perhaps, unconscious. Just as New York critic Pauline Kael once said, “I don’t know how Richard Nixon could have won. I don’t know anybody who voted for him,” the insular realm of the Fourth Estate takes the worldview of the pro-choice cause—which it shares—to be normal and neutral.

[CLARIFICATION]

## SPLIT TICKET

Four weeks ago, we published an item here, “Regime Change,” calling on Karl Rove to consider replacing Dick Cheney on the 2004 ticket—as Bush-campaign polling indicated might be advantageous and for reasons no doubt familiar to our readers. Picked up by Liz Smith’s *New York Post* column, it circulated quickly and widely, with Smith asserting, “Pat and Taki firmly believe Cheney has to go.” Actually, the opinion is not Pat’s, which the item should have specified by bearing the initials (mine) of the editor who wrote it.

—SM

## The American Conservative

### Editors

Patrick J. Buchanan  
Taki Theodoracopulos

### Executive Editor

Scott McConnell

### Managing Editor

Kara Hopkins

### Literary Editor

Matthew Alexander

### Film Critic

Steve Sailer

### Staff Writer

Daniel McCarthy

### Art Director

Mark Graef

### Office Manager

Veronica Yanos

### Publishing Consultant

Ronald E. Burr

### Newsstand Consultant

Rande Davis

*The American Conservative*, Vol. 2, No. 22, November 17, 2003 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for double issues in January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd, Suite 120, Arlington VA, 22209. (703) 875-7600. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 99010, Collingswood, NJ 08108-0612.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds). **For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries**—by mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 99010, Collingswood, NJ 08108-0612. By phone: 800-579-6148 (outside the U.S./Canada call 856-488-5321). Via the web: [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com). When ordering a subscription please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions. This issue went to press on October 16, 2003. Copyright 2003 *The American Conservative*. Inquiries to the editor should be sent to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com).

[RITUALS]

### STILL IN SEARCH OF ...

The huge volume of blogging about *l'affaire* Easterbrook testifies to the fascination the subject holds for American media scribblers. The subject is, of course, not merely Gregg Easterbrook's *New Republic* Web column about Hollywood's values and the sledgehammer of accusation that came pounding down on him. It is rather the tangled crossroads where discussions of anti-Semitism, Jewish power in American society, free speech, professional prudence, and the individual writer's obligation to try to confront the truth collide.

Easterbrook, a neoliberal journalist best known for his work on science and environmental subjects, attacked Quentin Tarantino's violence-fest "Kill Bill" and chided the execs at Disney and Miramax who funded it. He wrote the Jewish producers of the movie should be ashamed for "promoting for profit the adulation of violence." Unsurprisingly, the ethnic reference raised alarms. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) struck hard. Disney-owned ESPN fired Easterbrook from a lucrative sports-writing gig. Easterbrook worried that Eisner might retaliate against his forthcoming book, blacklisting him from talk shows.

Colleagues who have known Easterbrook for years asserted categorically that he is not in the least anti-Semitic. But some chastised him for ascribing to his targets a Jewish motivation for flaws like love of money that are universal. But the offending passage didn't limit itself to Jews. In the same piece and in other columns, Easterbrook criticizes Christian executives for the same failing. One could easily read his argument as holding Jews to a higher standard: "Recent European history alone ought to cause Jewish executives to experience second thoughts about glorifying the killing of the helpless as a fun lifestyle choice." This formulation loosely reflects a senti-

ment that one does hear from Jews—a sort of folk wisdom that Jewish life is more secure when society is not coarse and violent. It is something of a philo-Semite's point, and a Christian who makes it is likely to be one who spends time with Jews and identifies with them.

Easterbrook acknowledged that his column was hastily and awkwardly written, and he apologized. A paragraph that puts references to money and media power and Jews near one another virtually guarantees that some will read it as anti-Semitic, regardless of the author's intent. In his blog, Steve Sailer notes that one could make the same point as Easterbrook did about the black producers of rap music and not be scored as a racist—you'd "sound like Bob Herbert"—ratification of the fact that societal sensitivities about Jews and blacks are very different.

The episode fascinates not for the content but for the ritual. After the writer's initial apology, the storm clouds of condemnation continued to gather. Abe Foxman's ADL replied coldly that the apology did not go far enough. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* derided the writer for mentioning that he attends a church where Jews and Christians worship together—a "some of my best friends are" defense, the paper snorted. The spectacle was both mesmerizing and terrifying: a well-established author with impeccably centrist credentials suddenly brought to the brink of professional purgatory, then—perhaps, it is not yet clear—pulled back: the ADL "accepts" the apology of the *New Republic* but still not of Easterbrook himself. On the blogosphere, there was even speculation that the ESPN job could one day be restored. How magnanimous, how forgiving are the media masters!

In the end, it's an object lesson, to American journalists whatever their views: better to be cautious than bold.

—SM

# Culture War to the Death

Gov. Jeb Bush has ordered the feeding tube reinserted into Terri Schiavo, the severely brain-damaged Florida woman who has been artificially fed for 13 years.

Bush contravened a court order. Terri's parents had implored the governor to save their daughter.

Is cutting off food and water to a patient murder, as it surely would be with an infant? Is pulling out Terri's feeding tube to let her die of starvation and dehydration morally different from giving her a lethal injection? In ending the life of a pet, the injection seems more "humane."

In France, this debate has exploded. Marie Humbert, acting at the request of her mute, deaf, paralyzed, nearly blind son Vincent, put an overdose of sedatives in his feeding tube. Vincent did not die. He fell into a coma and became a "human vegetable." Then, his doctor ordered all life support ended. About Vincent's death, there is no argument. He was put to death by his mother and doctor.

On both cases, men and women who believe themselves moral are divided. In the phrase of author Thomas Sowell, what we have here are "Visions in Conflict."

Christian traditionalists contend that God is the Author of life who alone decides when life ends. No man can destroy innocent life. Among such traditionalists are John Paul II and those lobbying Governor Bush to save the life of Terri Schiavo.

On the other side of the moral divide are those who argue that whether or not God exists, there is no higher law to which human law must conform. Each individual has the right to decide when to end a life that has become unbearable.

And when a Terri Schiavo cannot make that decision, those closest to her can.

As Governor Bush intervened on behalf of Terri's parents, the ACLU intervened on the side of her husband, who wanted Terri's life ended.

The positions are irreconcilable. Each reflects the view of one of the adversaries in the great Culture War in the West, as we enter deeper into a post-Christian era where the old laws no longer bind.

There is no doubt that the traditionalists are in retreat. In France, 88 percent consider themselves tolerant of euthanasia. In Holland, assisted suicide and euthanasia have been legalized. Children from 12 to 18 can be euthanized with their parents' consent, if they argue that their suffering is unbearable and a doctor concludes that there is no realistic chance of amelioration.

Oregon has passed a Death with Dignity Act, legalizing suicide for the terminally ill with six months to live. Eighteen Oregonians killed themselves in 1998. Last year, the number rose to 38. Even Dr. Kevorkian, in prison for having put to death individuals who were only deeply despondent, is admired by some as a social pioneer.

Trends in the moral and social universe seem such that the West of 2050 will not even be recognizable to the West of 1950.

Christianity is dying in Europe, its proscriptions ignored by the many and unknown to the young. Europeans believe they have a right to end their own lives as they choose and to abort

the lives of their unborn. Dutch doctors perform "mercy killings" on terminally ill patients in a land where doctors were heroes, 60 years ago, for resisting the Nazis' euthanasia program.

Moreover, Europe is aging. By mid-century, a third of Europe's population will be over 65, a tenth over 80. Nursing homes will be stuffed to capacity with the elderly, feeble, sick, incontinent, dying.

To care for Europe's exploding population of elderly, taxes will have to be raised repeatedly on the shrinking share of the population still working. Immigrants will have to be imported to care for them in retirement centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and hospices.

And among this godless population, for the young schooled in the utilitarian dogma of "the greatest good for the greatest number" and having embraced *La Dolce Vita*, a question will insistently arise: why work endlessly only to see half our wages go to keep alive, fed, and housed "useless eaters" whose lives are ending and who no longer contribute to society? Why should they not depart when they become ill, and cease to consume all our wealth?

If there is no God, no life after death, no higher law, and society may permit euthanasia, why can society not decide to make euthanasia mandatory for those who have begun to die? What is to stop the coming generation from kicking aged Baby Boomer and Gen Xers into their graves?

In 1938, the father of "Baby Knauer," a retarded blind boy missing an arm and leg, appealed to Germany's ruler to let his son die. Permission was granted. That leader was a father of the New Europe, and, as it now appears, a man ahead of his time. ■

[cold fusion]

## Conservative Crack-Up

Will libertarians leave the Cold War coalition?

By W. James Antle III

ASK A ROOMFUL of well-read conservatives to identify the political theorists who most influenced them, and some of the following names are likely to come up: Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Richard Weaver, F.A. Hayek, Russell Kirk, and Milton Friedman. That it would seem so natural for men from disparate philosophical traditions to appear together on such a list is a testimony to the success of the postwar American Right in forging a coherent national conservative movement out of traditionalist and libertarian elements.

This makes the emerging signs that this conservative-libertarian consensus is starting to unravel all the more problematic for the Right. The views expressed in most major American conservative periodicals reflect a combination of libertarian and traditionalist positions. In the not so distant past, even when compared to explicitly libertarian publications, there would be great similarity in subject matter (arguments for lower taxes, school choice, and Social Security privatization), contributors (Charles Murray, Thomas Sowell, and Walter Williams), and intellectual heroes (Hayek, Friedman, and Ludwig von Mises). There might be differences of emphasis, tone, and degree—the con-

servative magazines were much more concerned with political feasibility and the electoral fortunes of the Republican Party than their expressly libertarian counterparts—but also substantial agreement. The op-ed pages of conservative newspapers remain heavily populated by commentators affiliated with the libertarian Cato Institute, often described in the press as a conservative think tank.

Pick up copies of the mainstream conservative and libertarian magazines and compare them today. In their treatment of the Bush administration, Attorney General John Ashcroft, the Iraq war, and the Republican leadership, the libertarian magazines will read much more like the *Nation* than conservative outlets like the *Weekly Standard*. There have been increasingly testy exchanges taking place between the writers of *National Review* and *Reason* over such issues as the Patriot Act.

Also consider that in two recent cases where popular conservative figures have been embroiled in personal controversies—when the *Washington Monthly* and *Newsweek* reported on William Bennett's substantial gambling habit and Rush Limbaugh disclosed that he was addicted to painkilling drugs—libertarian commentators piled on with the

same relish as their liberal counterparts. FoxNews.com columnist Radley Balko lambasted Bennett as a hypocrite on his Web site: "Your vices—sinful, regretful, damnable. My vices—not so bad. The guy lost \$1.4 million in one two-month stretch. But he doesn't have a problem. Cancer patients who want to smoke marijuana—they're the ones who have problems." *Reason* editor Nick Gillespie wrote how conservative defenses of the pre-eminent radio talk-show host were ruining the "otherwise enjoyable story of Rush Limbaugh's exposure as a pill-popping hypocrite." This hostility is partly attributable to Bennett and Limbaugh's high-profile disagreement with libertarians over drug legalization and greater willingness to use government in the service of conservative ends in general. But it also shows the degree to which many conservatives and libertarians no longer see themselves as being on the same team.

The combination of libertarian and traditionalist tendencies in modern American conservatism was due in part to the need to gather together that ragtag band of intellectuals lingering outside the New Deal consensus who were opposed to the rising tide of left-liberalism. An alliance made out of political





CHRIS HIER'S

necessity, it drew some measure of intellectual consistency from the efforts of the late *National Review* senior editor Frank Meyer. He argued for the compatibility of innate individual freedom with transcendent morality, emphasizing that liberty has no meaning apart from virtue, but virtue cannot be coerced. Meyer saw libertarianism and traditionalism as two different emphases within conservatism, neither completely true without being moderated by the other. In fact, he held either extreme to be “self-defeating: truth withers when freedom dies, however righteous the authority that kills it; and free individualism uninformed by moral value rots at its core and soon brings about conditions that pave the way for surrender to tyranny.”

“Fusionism” was the name for Meyer’s synthesis, and while it was never without critics, it worked well enough for

most conservatives and for the development of an American Right that counted anti-statism and traditional morality as its main pillars, alongside support for a strong national-defense posture. When Ronald Reagan became the Republican presidential nominee in 1980, this even became the basis of the GOP platform: smaller government, family values, and peace through strength.

Yet a growing number of libertarians no longer think they are getting much out of the fusionist bargain. *Liberty* magazine editor R.W. Bradford called upon his fellow libertarians to cease thinking of themselves as operationally part of the Right. Writing in the September/October issue of that magazine, he argued that the mainstream conservative movement has abandoned “its claimed love of liberty and opposition to ever more powerful government” and instead have become “the greatest advo-

cates of an imperial foreign policy, of massive defense spending and of invading people’s homes in the names of the Wars on Crime, Drugs and Terrorism.”

Jeffrey Tucker of the Ludwig von Mises Institute has argued that “conservative” as a term for those who love liberty has gone the way of “liberal”—hijacked by statists so that it now means precisely the opposite. “We lost the word liberalism long ago, and only adopted the term conservative with the greatest reluctance. It is time to give it up too, neither describing ourselves as such nor allowing others to do so. We don’t take our marching orders from neocons. We don’t believe what we see on TV. We do not love the GOP. We are not nationalists. We believe in the idea of liberty. We are libertarians ...”

FoxNews.com’s Balko normally votes Republican and cast his ballot for George W. Bush in 2000 but now says



he's "90 percent certain" he "won't be voting for President Bush in 2004." He further argues that the "right now poses a greater threat to freedom than the left." Jim Henley, a noted libertarian blogger, put it even more bluntly: "Having abandoned the substance of limited government since early in the Gingrich 'revolution,' conservatives increasingly eschew even the *rhetoric* of limited government. Animosity aside, they're just no *use* to libertarians any more."

## THE DECLINE OF CONSERVATIVE ANTI-STATISM IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO TWO FACTORS: POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE PERCEPTION THAT BIGGER GOVERNMENT WILL BUY BETTER SECURITY.

The rift between conservatives and libertarians is not merely an esoteric debate between dueling pundits; it has also has concrete political ramifications. In one of the hardest-fought races of the 2002 campaign, Republican John Thune lost to incumbent Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) by just 524 votes. Libertarian Party candidate Kurt Evans won more than 3,000 votes—even though he dropped out of the race and endorsed Thune—more than enough to alter the outcome of the election. Small-l libertarians voting for Libertarian Party nominees rather than Republicans helped cost Republican Slade Gorton of Washington his Senate seat in 2000 and helped Democrat Harry Reid of Nevada hold onto his in 1998.

Libertarians have not limited their support to third-party efforts. Some have begun contemplating support for a Democratic presidential candidate to oust the Bush-Ashcroft Republicans. The antiwar Howard Dean appears to be the favorite. Already a Libertarians for Dean blog site debating the merits of libertarian support for his candidacy has

been set up on the Web. While a Libertarians for Clark Web site appeared and quickly dissipated following Wesley Clark's declaration of candidacy, the Dean site is still going strong with those posting on it inclined to support him. The liberal *American Prospect* ran a piece by Noah Shachtman on its Web site citing several prominent libertarians, including *Reason* assistant editor Julian Sanchez and Cato Institute senior editor Gene Healy, at least willing to contemplate a vote for Dean over Bush.

Even libertarians less inclined to vote Democratic have been talking about tactical alliances with the Left. One example is *Reason*'s science correspondent Ronald Bailey, who devoted an entire article to his decision to join the ACLU.

The Right's response so far has largely been silence. Some conservatives have noticed that they are losing libertarian support. *National Review*'s John J. Miller wrote an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* about the "GOP's Libertarian Problem." But his response was mainly that libertarians would vote Republican if they knew what was good for them, without acknowledging that the reason many do not is that even conservative Republicans have increasingly moved away from limited government. Others, like commentator and film critic Michael Medved, have ridiculed libertarian defectors as "losertarians."

Conservative intellectuals and journalists are no more interested in anti-statism than the politicians they back. In his recent essay for the *Weekly Standard*, Irving Kristol listed support for the welfare state and interventionism unre-

lated to concrete national interests as components of his neoconservative persuasion. Fred Barnes has written in praise of "big government conservatism," and while few of his colleagues would be so bold as to champion that phrase, a growing number clearly support what he considers to be the inherent trade-off that appears to guide the Bush administration's policy: "To gain free-market reforms and expand individual choice, he's willing to broaden programs and increase spending." This is why adding new government agencies, increasing federal expenditures, and running large budget deficits are acceptable to many of the Right's leading spokesmen and policy wonks as long as accompanied by modest—and potentially short-lived—tax cuts. It is therefore evident to libertarians that smaller government is no longer a serious political objective of the dominant forces on the American Right.

Although there are many reasons for this, the decline of conservative anti-statism is mainly attributable to two factors: political considerations and the perception that bigger government will buy better security against terrorism. Conservatives have come to the conclusion that cutting spending programs that benefit middle-class constituencies is a losing proposition at the ballot box. Spending cuts are as unpopular as tax increases, and while conservatives score points by raising the specter of higher taxes when campaigning against liberal Democrats, the liberals counter-attack by playing to fears that Republicans will cut funding for education, Social Security, and Medicare. Rather than continuing a fruitless effort to persuade the electorate that big government is economically and socially harmful, it is easier and politically more advantageous to play to the public's contradictory desire for both high spending and low taxes.

Things have only got worse since 9/11, as many conservatives now regard smaller government as incompatible with protecting the nation from terrorism. This has manifested itself not just in increased military spending but in new domestic expenditures as well. While Republicans were pledging to eliminate Cabinet departments as recently as 1996, the Bush administration has instead created a new one, the Department of Homeland Security, even though homeland security was something most Americans probably thought they had been getting from their spending on the Department of Defense.

Conservatives have been down this road before—during the Cold War. William F. Buckley Jr., whose tendencies over the years have been significantly more libertarian than those of today's neoconservatives, famously wrote in an article that appeared in *Commonweal* on Jan. 5, 1952,

[W]e have got to accept Big Government for the duration—for neither an offensive nor a defensive war can be waged, given our present government skills, except through the instrument of a totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores. ... And if they deem Soviet power a menace to our freedom (as I happen to), they will have to support large armies and air forces, atomic energy, central intelligence, war production boards, and the attendant centralization of power in Washington—even with Truman at the reins of it all.

Substitute militant Islam for Soviet power and Gephardt (or whichever establishment Democrat with presidential ambitions you prefer) for Truman and this is a fairly accurate representation of many contemporary conservatives' position on the size of government during the War on Terror. Viewing the

fight against international terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda as analogous to the Cold War struggle, they believe reinstating limits on the federal government is not just a lower priority but even a competing one.

Hence, many of today's conservatives accept the present cost and scope of the federal government as a given and are reluctant to control even its rate of growth. The Right's traditional pro-defense position is in the process of being transformed into neo-Wilsonian hubris and nation building. When combined with the fact that many topics that have long divided the Right along libertarian and traditionalist lines—homosexuality, pro-life issues, immigration—are becoming more salient, there is precious little to keep libertarians in the fold as a constituent group of an increasingly neoconservative American Right.

Can Meyer's fusionism be saved? This would be a challenging task now that growing numbers of conservatives eschew minimal government and a similarly high percentage of individualists have become "lifestyle libertarians" who reject moral orthodoxy. Indeed, it could even be argued that the mainstream Right today turns fusionism on its head by paying little more than lip service to either libertarianism or traditionalism.

But the combination of libertarian and traditionalist views among conservatives remains strong at the grassroots level. There is little evidence that the majority of those who consider themselves conservative have signed onto the project of building a "conservative" welfare state at home and projecting benevolent global hegemony abroad. The nannyism and predilection to view the state as a problem-solver of first resort that seem intrinsic to modern American liberals make any long-term relocation of libertarians to the left side of the political spectrum seem problematic. Libertarians with a deeper appreciation for the compatibil-

ity of liberty and traditional values like Lew Rockwell, Hans-Hermann Hoppe, and William L. Anderson have also been gaining in influence.

Perhaps we should look to the late 1960s and early '70s, the last time libertarians became disaffected with the Right and sought a unique political identity. One of the products of this period was the Libertarian Party, founded in 1971. This was back when the controversy over Vietnam raged and the issues were remarkably similar to those provoking conservative-libertarian tensions today—war, a Republican administration that was aggressively expanding government, and concern about civil liberties. The friction waned after libertarians enjoyed little success through their third-party movement and conservatives resumed railing against the depredations of big government. Republicans would in the ensuing years turn from Richard Nixon, whose legacy included wage and price controls, to Reagan, a candidate who favored tax cuts, deregulation, and spending restraint, while opposing peacetime conscription (although the independent libertarian identity was kept alive at least in part by Reagan's inability to reverse the growth of government once in office).

A return to first principles could restore the Right's fusionist consensus, but this would require that a vigorous challenge be mounted against the ideology now being represented as conservative orthodoxy. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks is often quoted as proclaiming, "We're all neoconservatives now." The impending breakup of fusionism shows that this is only true insofar as dramatic changes are made to the character of the American Right itself—changes many who have labored under its banner want no part of. ■

W. James Antle III is a senior editor of *EnterStageRight.com*.

# No Smoking Section

Dining out in Bloomberg's New York

By Dana B. Vachon

LIKE SO MANY of my colleagues in finance, I was deeply impressed with *The Devil Wears Prada*. After reading this book, I began to feel that I owed it to society at large to pair up with a 24-year-old assistant fashion editor. Indeed, the worldview of Andrea Sachs, protagonist of that literary milestone, struck me as a warm womb into which I could crawl to pull an existential Rip Van Winkle. I would wake up in 2034 and find myself in divorce court, but the intervening decades would have been a great run of catty talk, misplaced priorities, and near total avoidance of angst and epiphany: the twin enemies of my own happiness. With this in mind, having heard that many in media often eat at Da Silvano, I made plans to dine there.

I sat in the outdoor section, where a cool breeze lapped across the street and rustled the blonde hair of the young women at the table next to mine. The moon was hanging low in the gray-blue night. Deep within my DNA an ancient chromosome wondered if it would be a good harvest this year. The whole scene was very outside.

I reached into my jacket pocket for the Dunhill Lights that I had bought to enjoy after dinner. (I had the rabbit. It was delicious.) I leaned my chair back into the early autumn evening. Smoking.

Suddenly, there appeared a tan, silver-haired gentleman in a vast, black, Tommy Bahama shirt. He seemed to run the place and insisted that I was in violation of the Bloomberg Edict Fiat Mandate against smoking in restaurants.

"But aren't we not so much inside of a

restaurant as outside of one?" I asked him.

"No!" he replied, "Here, you cannot smoke! This is not outside!" I pushed the metal chair back perhaps five feet from the table, out onto the sidewalk along Sixth Avenue.

"What about now? Is this outside?"

Pedestrians improvised mid-stride pirouettes to avoid tripping over me. A dog walked by. Like St. Francis of Assisi, who spent a lot of time outside, I petted that dog.

But the man was unconvinced and swung his arms in protest like a frustrated umpire, declaring now to the evening itself, "This is not outside! Please, put the cigarette out!"

I was surrounded by people walking up and down Sixth Avenue. How could they be outside and I be not outside? Where was I? The only option seemed to be that I was inside. But if I were inside, then everyone was inside. Because that is how logic works. I looked across the street and out into the vast indoors of lower Manhattan. Da Silvano was larger than I had ever previously imagined.

"How are you able to afford rent on all of this space?" I asked the man, taking a drag off my Dunhill. I wondered how I was able to get a reservation at such a crowded restaurant without faking an effeminate voice and pretending to be my own assistant. Which I never do.

He interrupted my thoughts. "If an inspector is here, there is a \$1000 fine! Three fines—no restaurant!" A very good point and a low blow. He was now accusing me of threatening his livelihood.

But I work at a large corporation and happen to know that nothing enhances an older man's livelihood like a young sycophant fluffing his ego. "Don't major media figures come here all the time? Do you think that Bloomberg would really want to bother you? It would be in the papers for weeks, and he doesn't need that."

Another drag off my cigarette. It was fast becoming the most interesting object in my possession, magically capable of redefining entire spaces. I tilted the smoke around my palate and glanced at the back of the cigarette package. I could not help but think how these superb cigarettes in their distinctive beveled-edge pack are made with superior-quality tobaccos to Dunhill's unique standards of perfection.

The gentleman was unflattered, and the smoldering end of the cigarette became for a moment the center of his universe. He gestured to it and made a sly attempt to escape my flattery by invoking guilt and paranoia.

"There could be an inspector here right now!"

He was good, but I was better. Raised Catholic during the Cold War, I am something of an expert on guilt and paranoia. I squinted my eyes, tilted my head at an angle, and pointed at him with the glowing cherry like a young Javert.

"What makes you so sure that I'm not an inspector?"

He was unimpressed and now just glared. I took a last drag of the cigarette and tossed it to the vast *al fresco* floor of Da Silvano. I stamped it out with my loafer and was filled with awe as it made contact with the magical indoor/outdoor Astroturf of Mayor Bloomberg's New York. ■

Dana B. Vachon writes from New York.



[burke, not trotsky]

# What Conservatism Means

Hint: There's no such thing as creative destruction

By Owen Harries

JOHN STUART MILL famously dubbed the Conservative Party the “stupid party.” Mill was, of course, a liberal—but then so are most intellectuals. The English conservative, Roger Scruton, has recently written of his own experience growing up in the middle of the 20th century: “[A]lmost all English intellectuals regarded the term ‘conservative’ as a term of abuse. ... [it was] to be on the side of age against youth, the past against the future, authority against innovation ... spontaneity and life.”

As well as hostility, there is likely to be ignorance. Conservatism does not lend itself easily to schematic, didactic exposition, and conservatives do not readily engage in it. In introducing his anthology *The Conservative Tradition*, R.J. White defensively (or perhaps smugly and archly) claims, “To put conservatism in a bottle with a label is like trying to liquify the atmosphere or give an accurate description of the beliefs of a member of the Anglican Church. The difficulty arises from the nature of the thing. For conservatism is less a political doctrine than a habit of mind, a mode of feeling, a way of living.”

Bearing this resistance to formal treatment in mind, it is perfectly in character that what is widely accepted as the ablest and most influential statement of conservative views—Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*—is not a systematic statement of a position but a polemic reacting to a particu-

lar political situation: an unprecedented upheaval in the most illustrious and powerful country in Europe. Embedded therein, in unsystematic fashion, are the tenets of a political philosophy.

Two initial points about Burke’s *Reflections*: first, it was published in 1790, before the most violent manifestations of the revolution—before the terror, the regicide, the revolution devouring its own children, and the emergence of a military dictatorship. Therefore, Burke was writing with foresight, not hindsight.

Second, at the time it was published, the revolution was still seen in England as an immense liberating step forward. Most are familiar with Wordsworth’s “Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive” reaction and that of Charles James Fox: “How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! And how much the best!” In launching his denunciation of the revolution, Burke was not

or “theoretical reasoning” as applied to social and political questions and his conviction of the danger of such applications. He was writing at a time when the revolutionaries in France seriously believed that they could reconstruct the world from scratch by the application of general, abstract principles—to the point of introducing a new calendar to mark the beginning of that new world. In holding this belief they were not exceptional but representative of the most sophisticated opinion of their time, putting into action belief about the power of reason that representatives of the Enlightenment had energetically propagated. Burke rejected that belief for two reasons, the first having to do with the nature of society and politics, the second with the nature of human beings and their rational faculties.

When he wrote the *Reflections*, Burke had been engaged in politics at a high level for three decades. He saw that

**IN DENOUNCING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, BURKE WAS NOT EXPRESSING POPULAR OPINION BUT GOING AGAINST THE TIDE.**

expressing a popular opinion among thinking Englishmen but rather going against the tide.

Central to his reaction was a profound hostility toward what he called variously “speculation,” “metaphysics,”

activity as an infinitely complex, difficult, and delicate one. The factors at work were many, and the ways they interrelated were complex. Politicians had to act in concrete, discrete situations, not in general or abstract areas.

He wrote,

The science of constructing a Commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught a priori. It is a matter of the most delicate and complicated skill. ... A statesman differs from a professor at a university. The latter has only the general view of society; the former, the statesman, has a number of circumstances to combine with those general ideas, and to take into his consideration. Circumstances are infinite, and infinitely combined; are variable and transient; he who does not take them into consideration is not erroneous but stark mad—he is metaphysically mad.

In other words, discrimination in terms of circumstances trumps consistency in terms of principle and logic, and insistence on consistency regardless of circumstances and consequences is likely to be disastrous. Think of this the next time someone insists that because we act in one way toward Country X (say with respect to human rights) it would be hypocritical not to act in the same way to Country Y, regardless of the difference between the two countries or of the difference in our relationships. As Dean Acheson once put it, “I am not in the slightest bit worried because somebody can say, ‘Well, you said so and so about Greece, why isn’t all this true about China?’ I will be polite. I will be patient, and I will try to explain why Greece is not China. But my heart will not be in the battle.”

Society, for Burke, is neither a collection of loosely related individuals nor a mechanism with interchangeable parts. It is a living organism, and anything that affects the well being of any part of it will affect the whole. It is, therefore, he insists, “with infinite caution that any

man ought to venture on pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purpose of society.”

There are two problems of which Burke, and conservatives after him, have been acutely aware. The first is that of unintended consequences—that because of the complexity and interconnectedness of things, in initiating change on an ambitious scale, more is almost invariably set in motion than the initiator had in mind, and the result may be quite different from the intended one. Thus, in Burke’s words, “[V]ery plausible schemes with very pleasing commencements have often shameful and lamentable consequences.” To stop elephants from being killed, the ivory trade was banned. This made ivory scarce. Prices went up, and the rewards for poaching became greater. More people engaged in it, and more elephants were killed than before the ban was introduced.

The second problem is that of latent function. As well as their apparent functions, institutions often perform other, hidden functions of a very important nature—something that may not become apparent until those institutions have been dismantled.

In his 1959 book, *Political Man*, widely regarded as a classic of its kind, the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset observes the apparently “absurd fact” that 10 out of the 12 stable European and English-speaking democracies are monarchies. This, to Lipset’s mind, could not be an accident. He suggests that during the rapid and profound social and economic changes of the last 100 years, which apparently were making monarchy increasingly irrelevant, the institution played a crucial role in retaining the loyalty of those groups that were losing as a result of the changes: the aristocracy, the traditionalists, the clerical and rural sectors. The persistence of the central institution

provided reassurance that the world they knew was not totally lost, that the new social and political order could be adapted to. On the other hand, in countries that dispensed with monarchy (e.g., France, Germany, and the Hapsburg Empire after World War I), reconciliation and stability proved much scarcer commodities. Therefore, concludes Lipset, the changes that apparently made monarchy more anachronistic actually increased its importance as an “important traditional integrative institution during a transitional period.”

Conservatives may be more attuned to the appreciation of latent function than liberals precisely because they tend to be more concerned with stability and what might disturb it and because they have an organic view of society. If one’s focus is on individual rights and needs, and if one thinks in terms of rational patterns, then one may be less alert to latent functions.

If the complexity of society and the political order was one reason Burke feared radical and rapid change, a second and just as powerful reason was his reservation about the proposed engine of change: the role of reason in human affairs. Burke rejected the Enlightenment view of man as a predominantly rational, calculating, logical being. His rational side exists, but it is a small part of his total make-up. “We are afraid,” said Burke, “to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is small” Habit, instinct, custom, faith, reverence, prejudice—the accumulated practical knowledge acquired through experience, all this was more important than abstract reasoning. Collectively, and for better or worse, it constituted man’s nature.

Burke was not alone in expressing these views. The great Scottish philosopher David Hume had insisted on the importance of habit and custom a gener-

ation earlier. And a year or two before Burke wrote, across the Atlantic the shapers of the American Constitution and authors of *The Federalist Papers* were insisting that in constructing a political order, the aggressive, selfish, acquisitive aspects of man's nature must be taken fully into account. "A man must be far gone in Utopian speculation," thought Hamilton, "to forget that men are ambitious, vindictive and rapacious."

But they were all arguing against the prevailing intellectual tide of the times—the Age of Enlightenment—which saw customs and habits and prejudice as impediments that could be swept aside to restore the human mind to its pristine state as a clean slate on which reason could then write its message. For the French revolutionaries, what passed for human nature was not something to be accommodated or curbed, as the authors of *The Federalist Papers* believed, but rather to be altered.

One might see this as the crucial difference between the French, with their notion of restarting history and creating an entirely new set of perfectly rational political institutions, and the Americans, who when it came to framing a Constitution, put their faith in checks and balances and separation of powers to keep in control the effects of what Christians would term original sin. This conflict between the *tabula rasa* school and the human-nature school has continued and has been central to many debates about social and political policy.

In contrast to what was happening in France, where everything was concentrated in Paris, Burke put great emphasis on the local, the proximate, and particular. "To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections." Here Burke may be seen as anticipating Tocqueville in stressing the

importance of civil society and intermediate, participatory associations, as against the state; the actual particular wills of people going about their particular lives, as against the abstract General Will espoused by the revolution.

As opposed to the abstract Rights of Man, Burke spoke of the existing rights that man actually possessed and enjoyed. He sometimes used the term natural rights but meant by it the historical, prescriptive rights inherited within the context of particular societies and legal systems: the rights of Englishmen, or Americans, or Indians or Frenchmen—not of "man" in the abstract. Again the particular is contrasted to the general and the historical to the abstract.

For Burke, historical continuity was central to his understanding of society. In one of his most quoted phrases, he described it as a "partnership . . . between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are yet to be born."

## IN CONTRAST TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN FRANCE, BURKE PUT GREAT EMPHASIS ON THE LOCAL, THE PROXIMATE, AND PARTICULAR.

That is, the present is not the property of the living, to make of it whatever they will. It is an estate held in trust. Those who hold it have a fiduciary responsibility to hand it on in good condition. This trust the revolutionaries were in the process of betraying. In the name of reason, liberty, and equality they were destroying all the historical institutions of legitimate authority.

With authority gone, the result would be not liberty but increasing dependence on naked force to compel obedience and maintain order. With extraordinary insight, and no historical precedent to guide him (the concept of totalitarian-

ism was still to be invented), at the outset of the revolution, when optimism and idealism reigned, Burke intuited that it must end in terror and dictatorship.

Burke has frequently been represented as a reactionary. But Burke was not defending or advocating a return to an aristocratic or monarchic order. He was defending the mixed system that existed in the Britain of his day—a combination of aristocratic, commercial, oligarchic, and democratic elements. Far from opposing all reform, Burke insisted, "A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation." The issue was not reform versus no reform; it was between the view that reform was a simple matter that could be engaged in sweepingly and the view that it required prudence and was best approached incrementally.

That Burke sometimes sided with those in authority, and sometimes with those resisting it, has led to the charge

that he was inconsistent and opportunistic. But Burke was perfectly consistent in that he opposed the abuse of power, whoever was abusing it—king, corrupt company, intellectuals, or mob.

When, then, do his ideas become relevant and attractive? Michael Oakeshott gives the obvious answer: when there is much to be enjoyed and when that enjoyment is combined with a sense that what is enjoyed is in danger of being lost. It is the combination of enjoyment and fear that stimulates conservatism.

That seems convincing until one considers: if one is living in and enjoying, say, a liberal or a social democratic or a



capitalist society; and if that society suddenly comes under threat, why can't one defend it with liberal arguments, or social democratic, or capitalist arguments? Why does one need conservative arguments?

In an article called "Conservatism as an Ideology," published in 1957, Samuel Huntington observes that unlike nearly every other ideology, conservatism

arguments that defend the established institutions precisely because they are established. When radicalism prevails, conservative arguments must be resorted to in order to counter it.

Particularly intriguing about Huntington's argument is that it perfectly predicted what was to happen in the 1960s. In that decade, there was a powerful upsurge of radicalism, associated ini-

only to nation building in Iraq but also to region building throughout the Middle East. The belief that democratic institutions, behavior, and ways of thought can be exported and transplanted to societies that have no traditions of them is a profoundly unconservative, indeed a radical, belief. Conservatives traditionally have believed in the slow, organic growth of political institutions, not their imposition from without. Yet the most enthusiastic advocates of exporting democracy are American neoconservatives, which perhaps suggests that their break with their earlier modes of thought has been less than complete.

In the 1770s, when Britain had recently added North America and India to its Empire, when its economy was the strongest in the world, when it ruled the seas, it occupied a position not too different from the one occupied by the United States today. Contemplating all this power, Burke uttered a warning that seems to be pertinent in our present circumstances:

Among precautions against ambition, it may not be amiss to take precautions against our own. I must fairly say, I dread our own power and our own ambition: I dread our being too much dreaded. ... We may say that we shall not abuse this astonishing and hitherto unheard of power. But every other nation will think we shall abuse it. It is impossible but that, sooner or later, this state of things must produce a combination against us which may end in our ruin. ■

*Owen Harries was Editor-in-Chief of the National Interest from 1985-2001. This essay is an edited version of a paper that appeared in Policy, the journal of The Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney, Australia.*

## THE BELIEF THAT DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS CAN BE EXPORTED IS PROFOUNDLY UNCONSERVATIVE.

offers no vision of an ideal society. There is no conservative Utopia. Indeed, conservatism has no substantive institutional content. It has been used to defend all sorts of different institutional arrangements, from traditional to feudal to liberal to capitalist to social democratic. Because it is concerned not with content but with process, with change and stability, its true opposite is not liberalism but radicalism. Conservatism advances arguments that stress the difficulty and danger of rapid change and the importance of stability and continuity and prudence; radicalism expresses enthusiasm concerning innovation and boldness in embracing change.

Conservatism, Huntington maintains, is the product of intense ideological and social conflict when consensus breaks down and when an existing institutional order can no longer be defended in its own terms. "When the challengers fundamentally disagree with the ideology of the existing society ... and affirm a basically different set of values, the common framework of discussion is destroyed." When it is precisely liberal values and institutions that are being rejected, there is no point in appealing to those values to defend them. It is then that conservative arguments become indispensable:

tially with the Civil Rights movement and protest against the Vietnam War but quickly going beyond that to reject the whole fabric of American society. New Deal liberalism was denounced and rejected as "Cold War liberalism" or worse, and the radicals began their long march through our institutions.

It was in these circumstances that a group of liberal intellectuals—almost all of them members of the Democratic Party, many of them prominent members of the New York intellectual community—began to oppose the radical movement, to defend American institutions and values with classic conservative arguments. They were attacked from the left and derisively labeled "neo-conservatives." It was meant as an insult but readily accepted by Irving Kristol—the godfather of neoconservatism—and his colleagues.

They became an important force in American politics and have remained so. Many joined the Republican Party. They brought with them intellectual and polemical skills that had been in scarce supply on the Right, and by the 1980s they had seized the intellectual initiative from the Left.

Under the neoconservatives' guidance, we now have a president committed not

# Most Favored Democracy

The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies goes on offense.

By Daniel McCarthy

THE IMAGES ON THE SCREEN show American flags on fire, children dressed as suicide bombers, Saddam Hussein triumphantly addressing a throng of Iraqis, and grainy footage of the destruction wrought by a terrorist attack. These arresting pictures and the voice-over narration tell viewers that the war in Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and al-Qaeda's attacks against the United States are all part of a larger war that Israel and the U.S. must fight together.

Congressmen and senators, White House aides and Pentagon officials, lobbyists and journalists are seeing the ad, which has been running on cable television in the Washington D.C., area. It is just one tactic used by an aggressive new neoconservative think tank, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD), to shape American thinking on war, terrorism, and the Middle East. The Foundation is only two years old, but already the group is making its influence felt on the nation's policy-makers.

In early 2001, a tightly knit group of billionaire philanthropists conceived of a plan to win American sympathy for Israel's response to the Palestinian *intifada*. They believed that the Palestinian cause was finding too much support within crucial segments of the American public, particularly within the media and on college campuses, so they set up an organization, Emet: An Educational Initiative, Inc., to offer Israel the kind of PR that the Israeli government seemed unable to provide itself.

At first, Emet floundered, without an executive director or a well-defined mission. But that changed after Sept. 11, and Emet changed too, into what is now the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. The name is different, but the goal of influencing America's opinion-forming classes remains.

Emet became the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies thanks in large part to Clifford May, FDD's president and an old hand at the spin game. From 1997 to 2001 he was the Republican National Committee's director of communications. Before that he was a journalist—associate editor of the *Rocky Mountain Daily News* and earlier a reporter and Africa bureau chief for the *New York Times*. May's vice president, Nir Boms, similarly has a background well suited to the group's operations. Boms was an academic liaison for the Israeli Embassy in Washington and has served in the Israeli Defense Forces. He came to the group even before May, as Emet's first hire.

The foundation's activities under May and Boms have been more ambitious than those of the typical think tank. FDD has targeted its advertising campaigns very carefully, with the television ads that ran in Washington and a print campaign directed specifically at the Hamptons. Hollywood has been considered as another potential target, and the foundation has even discussed using country music as a means to win over the American heartland to FDD's point of view.

Universities are also of particular interest to the foundation. Like Emet before it, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies wants to put to rout what it sees as anti-Israel, and indeed anti-American, bias on college campuses. To that end, FDD has established academic fellowship programs that last summer took 52 undergraduates and 19 professors—plus one journalist, Joel Mowbray, author of *Dangerous Diplomacy*—to Israel, where they could see the effects of terrorism at first hand and attend lectures by Israeli diplomats, academics, and military personnel, as well as spokesmen from other countries, such as Turkey and India, also dealing with what the foundation calls jihadist terrorism.

The foundation has sponsored conferences with other neoconservative groups as well and even sent one of its staffers, policy director Eleana Gordon, to Iraq to organize a conference of Iraqi women in conjunction with USAID. May, meanwhile, is a one-man media whirlwind, arguing FDD's case on cable television, on talk radio, and through his column on *National Review Online*.

The organization's campus programs have given FDD a cadre of media-savvy mini-Mays in colleges and universities across the country. "We look for students who are very bright, who are articulate, who are interested in being activists on this issue when they get back to their campuses," May says. And activists they do become, sponsoring campus lectures by foundation staff, organizing 9/11 commemorations that have doubled as war

rallies, and writing op-eds for local and campus newspapers.

What makes all of this possible is the support the foundation receives from its billionaire backers. Its nearly \$3 million annual budget comes from 27 major donors, most of whom are members of “the Study Group”—also sometimes called the “Mega Group” because of their sizeable contributions—a semi-formal organization of major Jewish philanthropists who meet twice a year to discuss joint projects.

The group’s membership includes, among others, U.S. Healthcare founder Leonard Abramson, New York financier Michael Steinhardt, Seagrams patriarch and Jewish World Congress president Edgar S. Bronfman Sr. and his brother Charles, and Lynn Schusterman, widow of Oklahoma oilman Charles Schusterman. Some of the group’s projects have been establishing and funding Birthright Israel, which provides Jewish youths with free travel to the Holy Land; a synagogue restoration program called STAR (Synagogue Transformation and Renewal); and the renovation and reinvigoration of Hillel, the Jewish campus chaplaincy. More than a few of these projects have generated controversy among some American Jews, who see this small group of mega-donors exercising considerable influence over Jewish-American affairs. But for all the debate that has attended some of these projects, none before has been as overtly political as Emet or FDD.

Leonard Abramson was the point man for establishing Emet. He, Michael Steinhardt, and Edgar Bronfman were the foundation’s board of directors at the time of its incorporation in the spring of 2001. Their original plan called for Emet to have centers in both the U.S. and Israel, with the Israeli branch to be located at Tel Aviv University under its president, the former Israeli ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich. Emet

was to have close ties to the Israeli government as well—so close, in fact, that there was some dispute between the mega-donors and the Israeli Foreign Ministry over just whose project this was. On March 9, 2001, three days before Emet’s articles of incorporation were filed in New York, the *Forward* reported that “A[n Israeli] Foreign Ministry source leaked news of the initiative—called ‘Emet,’ or ‘truth,’ in Hebrew—to Israel Radio, portraying the effort as a Foreign Ministry project that the Americans were trying to co-opt.” According to the *Forward*, the mega-donors were quick to assert their control in a letter to the Foreign Ministry, saying in part, “Either the Ministry will be part of the project or the Ministry will be left out.”

board of directors was being assembled, Emet’s backers and their associates were also in discussions with Clifford May about becoming the group’s executive director. When Emet was relaunched as the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies shortly after 9/11, May was its president, and Kemp, Kirkpatrick, and Steve Forbes—and also, initially, Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.)—were on its board of directors.

Money was still coming in from the mega-donors. Edgar Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt, together with Home Depot co-founder Bernard Marcus, each gave the organization \$250,000 in 2002. (Bronfman and Marcus gave their money directly; Steinhardt’s contribution came through the Judy and Michael Steinhardt

FDD ALSO BOASTED A BOARD OF ADVISORS THAT READS LIKE A **WHO’S WHO OF NEOCONSERVATIVE WONKS**—BILL KRISTOL, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, RICHARD PERLE, AND FRANK GAFFNEY.

Israel was the focus of Emet’s first and only major project. Emet worked through Hillel to sponsor fellowships for 40 undergraduates from North America to go to Israel, where “Hillel experts will help students prepare proactive Israel advocacy action plans for their campuses,” according to a Hillel press release dated July 10, 2001. At that time, Nir Boms was the only person working for Emet full-time. By the beginning of September, the mega-donors were looking to jump-start the organization. According to a report publishing in the *Forward* on Sept. 7, 2001, Emet—even before it became the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies—was already looking to recruit Jack Kemp and Jeane Kirkpatrick, two future FDD board members, to “speak out on Israel’s behalf.” At the same time a prospective

Foundation.) Leonard Abramson, Charles Bronfman, and Lynn Schusterman each gave \$100,000 or more individually or through personal foundations, as did several other major donors associated with the Study Group. Dalck Feith, father of Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, also gave \$100,000. The foundation’s revenue in 2002 came to \$2.9 million. In addition to such prominent, high-dollar donors, FDD also boasted a board of advisors that reads like a Who’s Who of neoconservative wonks—Bill Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, Richard Perle, and Frank Gaffney among them—and politicians and political activists from both parties, including Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Rep. J.D. Hayworth (R-Ariz.). Fully funded, fully staffed, and able to claim support from members of both major



parties, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, after a slow start as Emet, was ready to step into action.

Along the way the idea for an Israeli branch was jettisoned. May says he is unfamiliar with any plans there may have been for an Emet center in Tel Aviv. And, although there might be some broad similarities between the Emet fellowship program with Hillel and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies' own fellowships, May insists that they are two different things. "My conception of what kind of program we should do was rather different," he says, "... to be honest, I just wasn't terribly impressed with [Emet's] conception." Israel is still the site for the fellowship program, according to May, because it provides a setting in which students and faculty can see terrorism and counter-terrorism up close.

"We take them to Israel for the same reason that you'd take them to Kansas to study tornadoes or equatorial Africa to study tropical diseases. It's a place where you know you'll see the impact of terrorism and you'll see a small country fighting terrorism every day. You can, as we did this summer, take our students, who include Christians—mostly Christians—Jews and, this summer, two Muslims, and you take them to the border with Lebanon, and you can say, 'You see right there? Look through the binoculars, that's the Hezbollah outpost. Notice that it's flying a Hezbollah flag, not a Lebanese flag. Now look over there. That's a UN outpost. The UN does nothing about Hezbollah except to protect Hezbollah.'"

May and others at FDD emphasize that the foundation is about more than just Israel, however. If Israel seems especially important, that is in large part because of the extensive experience Israel has had with jihadist terrorism. Jihadist terrorists are of more interest than other kinds of terrorists, such as the IRA or the Columbian FARC, simply

### **The White House and Senate Republicans are doing damage control**

on the impending Senate Intelligence Committee report strongly criticizing CIA's pre-war intelligence on Iraq. Director George Tenet, unpopular at CIA due to the perception that he has not protected the Agency from White House pressure and Defense Department encroachment, has already fallen on his sword once over the Niger uranium claim. The White House is terrified lest the largely apolitical Tenet resign or be forced to quit as he could become a devastating weapon for Democrats in 2004 if he goes public on administration attempts to mold intelligence. Senate Republicans will attempt to shape the report so that it does not reflect badly on Tenet personally and does not look into the administration's role at all. The "intelligence process" that led to the misleading National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq will instead be indicted, meaning that no one is to blame.



**Administration infighting over Iraq policy** has achieved an intensity not seen since the Guelph-Ghibelline misunderstanding in 13th-century Florence. Baghdad's Civilian Administrator Paul Bremer may be forced to resign over his poor judgment in disbanding the Iraqi Army and attempting to introduce Turkish troops into Iraq. The proposed Turkish role has embarrassed both the White House and Ankara and has unified the normally docile Iraqi Governing Council in its opposition to the move. Secretary of State Colin Powell is so concerned about Pentagon mismanagement and foreign-policy collateral damage that he made his case in the strongest terms directly with the president prior to the Asian trip, compelling Bush to commit himself to a reassessment of policy. Donald Rumsfeld, meanwhile, apparently leaked his own classified memo that simultaneously provided a "realistic" assessment of Iraq to undercut critics like Republican Senators Chuck Hagel (Neb.) and John Warner (Va.); proposed a new counter-terrorism superforce that he would run; and blasted his own Joint Chiefs of Staff for failure to appreciate his strategic genius. Given the protean nature of the State-Defense struggle, it is no surprise that the bureaucratically inert Condoleezza Rice has been unable to stake out a middle ground. Nor has she taken control of Iraq policy per the presidential mandate she received last month.



**Neoconservatives continue to take root and bloom** in the office of Vice President Dick Cheney. David Wurmser, an American Enterprise Institute alumnus and protégé of Richard Perle, has been quietly appointed Middle East adviser under national security director Lewis "Scooter" Libby. Wurmser advocates U.S.-Israeli co-operation to bring down the Syrian government, adding his voice to those of Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. Perle's most recent sermon on Syrian maleficence took place in Jerusalem, where he received a special award from a group called the Jerusalem Summit, which advocates defense of "civilization" against Islamic fundamentalism. Perle applauded the Israeli attack on Syria and called for many more to come. He explained to an apparently enraptured audience that "Syria is itself a terrorist organization," adding that it "... is militarily very weak." However, he inexplicably failed to assert that liberating troops would be cheered in the streets of Damascus.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

as a matter of priorities, FDD says. Andrew Apostolou, the foundation's director of research, notes that other kinds of terrorism may require more attention in the future: "Remember that the worst war crimes of the last decade were committed by Orthodox Christians in the Balkans and these people are perfectly capable of striking out one day, [but] they haven't yet."

And just as terrorist threats may not always arise from Islamic fundamentalists, moderate Muslims can be an important ally in the war on terror, according to the staff at FDD. Eleana Gordon stresses that the foundation is careful not to be seen as calling for a war against Islam, and furthermore that it "also communicate[s] that Muslims are probably the number one victims. If you look at ... the civil war in Algeria, they kill Muslims and moderate Muslims first."

For all that, one will not find anyone speaking in behalf of Palestinian complaints against Israel at FDD. Asked about this, Gordon said that addressing such grievances is outside the foundation's purview. The foundation's interest lies in the means chosen to press the case. All at the foundation agreed that when terrorism is the means, it must be seen to reflect negatively on whatever cause it is employed to serve. May agreed that this should hold true for Israel as well, and that some discussion of the terrorism perpetrated by Irgun and the Stern Gang would be appropriate for FDD's programs.

Does all of this mean that the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies has abandoned Emet's goal of providing public relations support for the state of Israel? With mega-donor funding, a very capable staff, and a presence on campuses across the country, FDD is making a difference for someone. At the very least, the billionaire activists who established and support the foundation seem to be getting their money's worth. ■

# Turn Off, Wake Up

A Gen Xer puts down the remote.

By Jenny Schroedel

IT WAS A CRISP DAY in Crestwood, 20 miles north of New York City. In my ninth month of pregnancy, I could do nothing but waddle. That morning, I had waddled my way to chapel for morning prayers. After the service, I trudged up the hill under a denim sky, so blue and fresh my eyes watered. Breathless, I made it up the flight of steps to my apartment and collapsed on the sofa. Then I called my mom.

"Jenny," she said. "You've got to get to a television." My first thought: she's still on that TV crusade. Why can't she leave it alone?

That was Sept. 11, 2001. I did eventually find a friend with a television so I could watch footage of the planes smashing into the World Trade Center, followed by the thunderous collapse of the Twin Towers, its fragments showering the city like so many grains of sand. Smoke, screaming, and then silence itself broke open to swallow the waves of resounding loss.

I will never forget the tremors those images sent through my body as I watched the morning unfold on the television screen. When the Pentagon burst into flames, I felt mild contractions take hold. "The world is coming to an end, and I'm having a baby," I thought.

One odd memory is spliced between the more painful ones: the great hunt for a working television. Although I live in a tightly knit seminary community with many people my age, most of my close friends do not own televisions.

Two years have passed, and we still lack rabbit ears. My young family now lives in Chicago, and the trend contin-

ues: few of my friends are tuned in. Those of us who have intentionally created a television-sized hole in our lives are often victims of the misguided generosity of family members. In eight years of marriage, my husband and I have turned down three free televisions. Friends tell similar tales. A neighbor gestures toward a darkened TV crouched in her fireplace. "My mom gave this to me, and I don't like it."

Generation X lingers at the end of the alphabet—restless, savvy, wary, yearning, zealous. And a small but growing group of us are troubled by the shifting generational tectonics. The same grandparents and parents who lamented our "Sesame Street"-induced comas, pleading with us to get off the sofa and play outdoors, are now concerned about our *sans*-television existences.

"You must feel lost without a television," my husband's grandmother tells us. When my father-in-law comes to visit, he brings toddler-friendly videos for our daughter. Another relative gently reasons, "You and John may be fine without a television, but what about Anna?"

My mother, of course, makes the most compelling argument. "How will you keep up with what's going on in the world?" She has a point. On Sept. 11, live television allowed me to gasp, weep, and pray with the rest of the world.

But as I said before, my generation is inherently skeptical—especially about television news. If we watch the news, we don't believe that we are getting the full story. In charitable moments, we allow that it might be *based* on fact.

During high school, I watched the fireworks exploding over Kuwait with wide-eyed innocence, believing that smart bombs actually hit their targets and that Operation Desert Storm was efficient and just, if not deathless. Years later, when I learned that thousands of Iraqis had been killed, I hit the power button on my remote control and let the television go black.

People like my husband and I turned to books for answers, trading our *TV Guide* for Neil Postman's *Amusing Our-*

elevision on, I am sucked into the square vacuum. All I can do is nod at the screen, unable to form complete sentences, let alone think independently.

More troubling than my passive consumption of mediocre programming is that I become so engrossed that I begin to think of real life as an interruption. My toddler daughter tugging at my pant leg irritates me, the dog scratching to go out makes me groan, the ringing phone is an unforgivable intrusion. Even sunlight's poetry must be shut out—I draw

Columbine, the collapsing World Trade Center. These images can be difficult to understand, especially for young people. How can we not feel helpless? Perhaps this is television's curse: it opens wounds but doesn't heal them, raises questions but doesn't help answer them.

Theologian George MacDonald wrote, "A man is in bondage to whatever he cannot part with that is less than himself." Many from my generation are breaking the shackles. When the incessant drone of the television fades from our homes, our ears are able to catch the soft thumping of life's pulse—we begin to engage each other and the world around us. We live into the moment, aware that when our numbered days break open, we will find eternity hidden inside. ■

WHEN I VISIT SOMEONE WHO KEEPS THE TELEVISION ON, I AM **SUCKED INTO THE SQUARE VACUUM**. ALL I CAN DO IS **NOD AT THE SCREEN**, UNABLE TO FORM COMPLETE SENTENCES.

*selves to Death*. My father bought us a *Wall Street Journal* subscription, and on Sundays we feast on the *New York Times*. News gets into our home, one way or another.

The Internet helps. John surfs the news daily, perusing international newspapers, gleaning diverse perspectives on world events. A few months back, when American soldiers helped Iraqis pull down Saddam Hussein's statue, we glimpsed the historic moment—unfolding before our eyes on my husband's computer screen.

The jury is still out on all of Generation X's opinions and preferences. All that I say carries only as much weight as the experiences of my friends and me. Some of my peers are discerning television consumers. They tell me that they are able to watch a few shows every week and find it both relaxing and (gasp!) interesting.

But my own dysfunctional relationship with The Tube has left me with baggage. I suffer from television-induced Sudden Onset Couch Potato Paralysis. When I visit someone who keeps the tel-

the shades and settle back into my trance on the sofa.

My daughter's birth took place on the heels of Sept. 11. Both events shook me to a new awareness that life is fragile and we may have less time than we think. Soon after Anna was born, I took her for a walk through the quiet streets of my Westchester neighborhood, flags flapping in the wind.

A gray-haired man was putting the garbage out, and he came down his driveway to peek at my daughter. She was sleeping, curled in her sling, and he gazed down at her with incredible tenderness.

"How old is she?" he asked.

I told him she was five days old, and he shook his head.

"God bless you," he said. "God bless you."

Older people seem to pity my generation. We do live in complicated, troubling times, and the media will not let us forget this. I've seen so much—almost too much—on the television screen: the flaming Challenger, the toppling Berlin Wall, the bullets ricocheting through

*Jenny Schroedel is a freelance writer in Chicago. Her children's book, The Blackbird's Nest: Saint Kevin of Ireland, is under contract with Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press.*

## MOVING?

### Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com). Click "subscribe" and then click "address change." To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

**The American Conservative**  
Subscription Department  
P.O. Box 99010  
Collingswood, NJ 08108-0612



# First Use Brigade

The War Party's nuclear doctrine

By Paul Craig Roberts

*"Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." Vice President Dick Cheney, 8-26-02*

*"For those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong, we found them." President George W. Bush, 5-30-03*

WHEN IT BECAME obvious that the neoconservatives would succeed in turning the "war against terrorism" into war against the Muslim Middle East, I said that the consequences would be the return of the draft or U.S. use of nuclear weapons.

Bush administration neoconservatives have concluded that reinstating the military draft would incite more opposition than inaugurating a new weapons program to produce "useable nukes."

In the Oct. 26 *Telegraph*, Washington correspondent Julian Coman reports, "[I]nfluential advisers at the Pentagon are backing the development of a new generation of low-yield nuclear weapons—so-called mini-nukes—in a controversial report ... the report argues for a move away from the Cold War view of nuclear arms as catastrophic weapons of last resort."

In place of bad old nuclear weapons, the good new nukes will be easier to use and more "relevant to the threat environment."

This extraordinary proposal from the world's Arms Control Hegemon demonstrates the fanaticism of the neoconservatives. They are indeed the heirs of the

French Revolution just as Professor Claes Ryn shows in his new book, *America the Virtuous*.

The Pentagon report, which has been leaked to a defense magazine, designates "terrorists" as the targets of the mini-nukes. New nuclear weapons are said to be necessary in order to destroy deeply buried biological weapons caches, terrorist cells, and hidden weapons of mass destruction.

Such weapons caches will exist wherever neoconservatives declare them to be. For the neocons, the advantage of a nuclear over a conventional attack is that the former solves the manpower problem and, by obliterating the target, conveniently rules out discovering the embarrassing fact of nonexistent WMD.

Obviously, nuclear weapons of any size are too destructive to use against terrorists, who are scattered among much larger populations. The only purpose of the "small nuclear weapons"—an oxymoron if ever there were one—is to incinerate Muslim cities. Just as Iraq, Iran, and Syria are declared, propagandistically, to be "terrorist states," Damascus, Tehran, Baghdad, Mecca, Cairo, and Mogadishu will be declared "terrorist cities." It looks as if the neocons intend a final solution to their "Muslim problem" and are organizing genocide for Arabs.

Deeply buried caches of weapons of mass destruction exist nowhere except, of course, in the U.S., Israel, and Russia—countries that are not to be found on the terrorist list. But neocons are betting that a rumored threat can be used to justify a new generation of nuclear weapons.

Propaganda about nonexistent weapons caches is fuel for the neoconservative *jihad* against Islam, just as fabricated claims of Iraqi WMD were used as a pretext for invading Iraq. It is not American "virtue" but nuclear fallout that neocons intend to spread in the Middle East.

During three short years of the Bush administration, neoconservatives have turned U.S. foreign policy on its head. They dismantled U.S. multilateral relationships that were a half century in the making. They used lies and fabrications to deceive the American public and to launch an aggressive war. Not satisfied with their revolutionary destruction of world order, they now demand that the U.S. lead the world in a new round of nuclear proliferation. If this is not the behavior of a rogue state, what is?

The Pentagon report argues for a new generation of useable nuclear weapons on the bare assumption that terrorist underground caches of WMD will materialize out of thin air sometime in the future. The Pentagon report does not explain why terrorists who intend us harm would make targets of their WMD by storing them in bunkers instead of immediately using them against us.

In three short years, neoconservatives have reorganized the Department of Defense from a deterrent force to a means of waging aggressive war. It shows that U.S. policy, following that of Ariel Sharon, has abandoned the quest for peace in the Middle East, focusing instead on a one-sided resolution through conquest.

Deceived, befuddled, and complicit, Americans are being led into a wider war. ■

---

*Paul Craig Roberts is co-author with Lawrence Stratton of The New Color Line, a history of U.S. racial quotas, their origin, and consequences.*

© Creators Syndicate 2003.

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*Veronica Guerin*]

### Heroin Heroine

By Steve Sailer

WE'VE ALL SEEN IT dozens of times: the middle-aged bad guy throws a punch at the willowy heroine, but she evades it with a wire-assisted back-flip. Then she slams home a half-dozen kung-fu kicks and, if it's a Quentin Tarantino movie, pulls out her samurai sword and lops off a few limbs and the top of his skull case. You go, girl!

In "Veronica Guerin," the small but honest and uplifting biopic about the crusading journalist who became Ireland's new national heroine, that scene, however, plays out differently—shockingly so. Ace actress Cate Blanchett (Oscar-nominated for "Elizabeth") cheekily bangs on the imposing front door of Ireland's biggest heroin importer. When the bantamweight thug emerges, she asks him to confess his crimes for publication in her newspaper column.

Enraged, the gangster slams his fist into her face, breaking her nose. He pummels the defenseless woman with lefts and rights, leaving her a bleeding shell. There's nothing feministically empowering or fetishistically titillating about this horrifying depiction of what violence between a man and a woman really looks like.

Veronica Guerin, an accountant turned PR flack turned investigative reporter, normally fought Ireland's organized criminals with a woman's best weapon: words. To write crime stories that no other reporter could (or would)

pursue, she flirted both with policemen frustrated by Ireland's mobster-friendly laws and with vainglorious underworld snitches. As Blanchett observed in an interview, Ireland is a "country of great talkers and she was an extraordinary listener."

Ultimately, Guerin became a martyr for law and order. Most people in Ireland can remember where they were on June 26, 1996, when they heard a hit man had assassinated her. She was an Irish Princess Di who actually did before she died.

The social collapse that devastated American cities in the 1960s had reached Dublin by 1994. Heroin addicts sprawled about the public-housing projects, while lenient laws allowed major dealers to operate with impunity. Like much of Europe, Ireland hadn't yet awoken to the grim but workable trade-off that the U.S. stumbled upon first: to enjoy the cultural liberation begun in the 1960s without the accompanying chaos, an urban society must imprison many of its most dangerous men on drug charges.

In 1994, Guerin started writing exposés on the heroin rackets. She quickly became a star with a public desperate for news. Other journalists, how-

until the social conditions that underlie it are tackled through radical redistributive policies. But the Veronica Guerin phenomenon is obstructive of all that."

"Veronica Guerin" was produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, the kaboom-monger behind "Pearl Harbor," and directed by Joel Schumacher, the drek-meister behind "Batman & Robin." The reputation of this frequently gruesome two-some accounts for many of the bad reviews the movie has received from American critics, who denounced "Veronica Guerin" as self-evidently unrealistic, arguing (contradictorily) that the portrayal of Guerin was either too hagiographic or too egotistic and reckless.

A Google search, however, would have shown them that Irish reviewers uniformly admired the movie's accuracy (the most common Irish complaint was that a politician celebrated for flaunting the Irish Parliament's dress code was shown wearing a tie), the balanced characterization of Guerin, and even the Australian Blanchett's impeccable accent.

As last spring's nifty mini-thriller "Phone Booth" showed, Schumacher is less egregious when held to a modest budget. Bruckheimer allowed him only \$17 million (one third of the average

**THERE'S NOTHING FEMINISTICALLY EMPOWERING OR FETISHISTICALLY  
TITILLATING ABOUT THIS HORRIFYING DEPICTION OF WHAT VIOLENCE  
BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN REALLY LOOKS LIKE.**

ever, despised her amateurism, her grandstanding, her extravagant bravery, and her lack of faith in leftist mantras about the "root causes of crime." Even a few years after her murder, journalist Vincent Browne was still denouncing her in Ireland's *Sunday Business Post*: "The drugs trade will continue as before

Hollywood picture's cost) because he understood that while "Veronica Guerin" is a perfectly fine middlebrow movie, it has to be marketed here as a limited-release highbrow film because of the impenetrable brogues of the lowbrow boyos. All the crooks sound like talk-show appearances by the Irish It Boy

Colin Farrell, who, indeed, pops up for an amusing cameo.

"Veronica Guerin" is so brief (about 20 minutes shorter than the typical 115-minute movie), that it barely sketches out why Guerin repeatedly risked her life and that of her husband and little boy. Instead of concocting some bogus childhood trauma—a flashback showing, say, little Veronica's drunken Da killing her pet bunny—the film merely has her mother (Oscar-winner Brenda Fricker from "My Left Foot") reminiscing that she always was a hypercompetitive tomboy.

Guerin scoffed at threats: "Nobody shoots the messenger." Perhaps she reasoned that the more hard-hitting her stories, the more famous she'd become, and the more famous she was, the less the gangsters would dare kill her for fear of a vast backlash—a magnificently courageous miscalculation. Yet, she didn't die in vain because the public rose up and forced the politicians finally to crack down hard on crime. ■

Rated PG-13 for sexual content, language, and brief violence.

## BOOKS

[*Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*, Charles Murray, HarperCollins, 688 pages]

## Culture's Bell Curve

By Steve Sailer

FEW FIGURES IN American intellectual life more admirably combine ambition and modesty than data maestro Charles Murray. Every decade or so, Murray delivers a big book full of graphs and tables that audaciously but judiciously illuminates a vital topic.

In 1984, Murray's *Losing Ground* demonstrated the malign effect of Great-Society-era programs on the poor, laying the basis for the successful welfare-reform act of 1996.

His huge 1994 best-seller, *The Bell Curve*, co-written with the late Richard J. Herrnstein, had the opposite effect. It made such a definitive case for the broad impact of differences in intelligence that the dread letters "IQ" had to be driven out of polite society. For example, the new book *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* by conservative scholars Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom obsessively avoids even mentioning *The Bell Curve* until the fine print notes at the back. This post-*Bell-Curve* taboo on IQ made possible the recent No Child Left Behind Act mandating that every public-school student in America be academically "proficient" by 2014. Even the Thernstroms recognize that this attempt to legislate America into Lake Wobegon, where all the children are above average, is absurd.

In 1997, Murray quietly began a huge project to rank objectively history's most important discoverers and creators so that he could examine the causes and correlates of greatness. The result is his gracefully written and enthralling *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*.

For example, to determine the most significant Western visual artists, Murray assembled 14 leading comprehensive works by art historians such as Gombrich and Janson. For each name in each book's index, he typed into his computer basic measures of importance such as the number of pages mentioning the artist. (No surprise: Michelangelo came out on top.)

This sounds simple, perhaps even simple-minded, but these kinds of metrics of eminence have been repeatedly validated during decades of use by social scientists ranging from Charles Darwin's smarter cousin Francis Galton to Murray's mentor, U.C. Davis psychologist Dean Keith Simonton. Still, the

process raised many technical problems that could have biased the results, such as which works to rely upon and how many to use. Murray meticulously dealt with each issue using his mastery of statistics.

Once assembled, his "inventory" of 4,002 significant figures in 21 categories allowed him quantitatively to test some Big Questions. For instance, did the pursuit of excellence flourish more in liberal democracies than in non-despotic monarchies? Answer: no.

Having spent 17 years in the marketing-data business, I love pointing out better ways to crunch numbers. I can identify several weaknesses in Murray's methods. For example, since we don't know the names of most of the countless artists who worked on the great medieval cathedrals, Murray can't include them in his tables of great individuals and thus he underrates the artistic accomplishments of the Middle Ages. Yet, to my surprise, I can't think of a single way to do it better than he did.

His methods and lists should become the standards for future research. There is little need to reinvent his wheels. If you want to rate other types of famous people, such as soldiers, violinists, or chefs, you can just follow his methodology. Conversely, if you want to explore questions Murray skips over, such as the role of social class, educational level, or left-handedness among the accomplished, you can just use his tables of names as your starting points.

Because Murray measures the consensus of the experts, his rankings aren't too surprising. Galileo is at the top in astronomy; Darwin in biology; Newton and Einstein in physics; Pasteur in medicine; Beethoven and Mozart in Western music; and, of course, Shakespeare in Western literature. Still, anybody who likes baseball statistics will find *Human Accomplishment* great fun.

For example, Thomas Edison is the only American to lead a category (technology, where he shares the top spot with steam-engine developer James Watt). In general, Americans didn't do terribly well in any other category,

although we can hope that we improved after 1950, when Murray stops in order to prevent ephemeral recent fads from warping the data.

Ben Franklin drubs Thomas Jefferson in the race to be our nation's foremost Renaissance man. Franklin scores as a major figure in both physics and tech-

rather on those of their subjects. For example, the best single confirmation of Beethoven's greatness might be Brahms's explanation of why he spent decades fussing before finally unveiling his First Symphony: "You have no idea how it feels for someone like me to hear behind him the tramp of a giant like Beethoven."

break free from conventional art history because he can't avoid writing about those whom subsequent artists emulated.

For example, Johnson finds Cézanne (who ranks 10th in Murray's table of 479 significant artists) painfully incompetent at the basics of his craft. Yet, Johnson has to grit his teeth and write about Cézanne at length because he "was in some ways the most influential painter of the late nineteenth century because of his powerful (and to many mysterious) appeal to other painters..." In contrast to Johnson, Murray keeps his artistic opinions upbeat or muted because his goals are scientific.

*Human Accomplishment* sheds fascinating light on identity-politics issues. Women, for instance, account for merely 2 percent of the 4,002 personages. They are strongest in Japanese literature, with 8 percent of the significant names, including the third-ranked Japanese writer, Lady Murasaki Shikibu, author of the thousand-year-old proto-novel *The Tale of Genji*. Women are particularly

nology, and a significant one in literature. Others who qualified in three categories include Galileo, Leibniz, Huygens, Archimedes, and Rousseau, who was not just a philosopher and novelist but also a successful comic-opera composer. The top polymaths, showing up as significant in four categories, were Descartes and, predictably, Leonardo Da Vinci.

All the rankings will inspire arguments, of course, but that's one of the book's pleasures.

French postmodernists will sneer at the very concept of objectively measuring greatness, but their brittle *amour propre* will be secretly salved by hearing that the most important city in Murray's lists, by far, is Paris. It was the workplace for 12 percent of the 4,002 significant scientists and artists. Of course, you can't construct interesting new knowledge like this if you actually believe the boring old deconstructionist dogmas.

France is tied with Britain and Germany as the leading nation, with Italy fourth. Interestingly, 80 percent of the significant Europeans grew up in a rather narrow axis running from Naples up the Rhine to Edinburgh.

Can we trust these data? The scholars upon whom Murray relies have their personal and professional biases, but, ultimately, their need to create coherent narratives explaining who influenced whom means that their books aren't primarily based on their own opinions but

In Paul Johnson's just-published and immensely readable book *Art: A New History*, you can see how even this most opinionated of historians must adapt himself to the judgments of artists. Much of the book's entertainment value stems from Johnson's heresies, such as his grumpy comment on Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: "No one ever wished the ceiling larger." Still, Johnson can't really

## Reliving the market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression ... Is history repeating itself?

Here's how the Clinton administration and Fed regulators manipulated the stock market to make the economy appear healthy when it was not. The mirage of a continuing cornucopia transfixed multitudes while, in the background, international financial interests were helping Red China direct its cheap labor and educated elite first against other Asian countries and, eventually, against the U.S. As a result, America is driving down the road to another Great Depression. Other factors include: trade & immigration policies; bad business practices; misleading media; and systemic flaws in the banking system. There is only a little time left. To prepare is to prevent.

Paperback, 329 pages, \$19.54 + \$5 shipping.

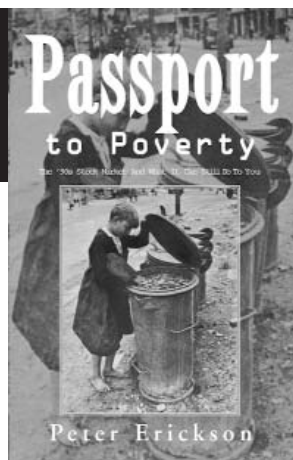
Hard Cover, 329 pages, \$29.69 + \$5 shipping.

### Order this important book today!

For credit card orders, call **1-888-795-4274**

Or through the Internet: [www.xlibris.com/PassporttoPoverty.html](http://www.xlibris.com/PassporttoPoverty.html)

For checks, mail to: **Xlibris Publishing  
436 Walnut St., 11th floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19106**





insignificant in composing classical music (0.2 percent) and inventing technology (0.0 percent). Is this changing much? Murray unofficially glanced at who "flourished" after 1950 (depressingly to me, he assumes careers peak at age 40) and found female accomplishment to be up sharply only in literature. In fact, the percentage of Nobel Prizes won by women fell from 4 percent in the first half of the 20th century to 3 percent in the second.

Still, Murray's rankings may be slightly unfair to female artists because they are less likely to have brilliant followers. My wife, for example, was incensed that Jane Austen finished behind the lumbering Theodore Dreiser and the flashy Ezra Pound. Yet, these men probably did have more influence on other major writers. That's because subsequent famous authors were mostly male and thus less interested than the female half of the human race in Austen's topics, such as finding a husband.

Dead white European males dominate his inventories, despite Murray reserving eight of his 21 categories (including Arabic literature, Indian philosophy, and Chinese visual art) for non-Western arts. Murray, who was a Peace Corp volunteer in Thailand and has half-Asian children, began this project wanting to devote even more attention to Asian accomplishments but found he couldn't justify his predisposition.

In the sciences, 97 percent of the significant figures and events turned out to be Western. Is this merely Eurocentric bias? Of the 36 science reference books he drew upon, 28 were published after 1980, by which time historians were desperately searching for non-Westerners to praise. Only in this decade has the most advanced non-Western country, Japan, begun to win science Nobels regularly.

Why is the West best? After five years of work, Murray still didn't know. Then, he had an unexpected epiphany: the single biggest reason most of history's highest achievers came from Christendom was ... Christianity.

He writes,

It was a theology that empowered the individual acting as an individual as no other philosophy or religion had ever done before. The potentially revolutionary message was realized more completely in one part of Christendom, the Catholic West, than in the Orthodox East. The crucial difference was that Roman Catholicism developed a philosophical and artistic humanism typified, and to a great degree engendered, by Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274). Aquinas made the case, eventually adopted by the Church, that human intelligence is a gift from God, and that to apply human intelligence to understanding the world is not an affront to God but is pleasing to him.

From 1850 to 1950, *per capita* accomplishment tended to decline, which is especially striking considering the huge spread of education. Diminishing returns in the sciences seem inevitable because the low-hanging fruit was picked first. In the arts, though, Murray believes that loss of faith in both the purpose of life and the efficacy of the individual retarded greatness, especially in the post-Freudian age.

Murray expects that almost no art from the second half of the 20th century will be remembered in 200 years. Indeed, Europe, homeland of geniuses, has collapsed into a comfortable cultural stasis reminiscent of Rome in the 2nd century A.D. In addition to Murray's philosophical explanations, I'd also point to causes such as the genocide of Europe's highest-achieving ethnic group (Jews were about six times more likely than gentiles to become significant figures from 1870 onward); the rise of anti-elitist ideologies; and the decline of nationalism. From Vergil to Verdi, great men engendered great works to celebrate their nations. Nobody, however, seems likely to create an epic glorifying the European Union. ■

*Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic and a reporter for UPI.*

*[Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide Between America and Europe, James Q. Whitman, Oxford University Press, 311 pages]*

## Crime & Punishment

By Peter Hitchens

MOST MODERN ACADEMIC works on crime and punishment are written from the point of view of the criminal. A society is judged on how humanely the violent, selfish, and dishonest are treated after they have been caught. This might seem odd, given that the professors who write these volumes are about as unlike criminals as it is possible to be. In fact, it is odd. Yet it is so, and we should wonder more actively about why it is so.

Partly it is because the modern social conscience, which judges a man by his opinions, despises all the important attributes of kingship, especially the need to defend peace and order with the civil sword unflinchingly and resolutely. Realism in this matter is generally defined as barbarism or cruelty by the secular liberal mind, which is afraid of any responsibility involving firmness and resolution.

Partly it is because crime does not often burst into the lives of academics in modern Western societies. For the moment, they live at a great distance from it and see it only in the form of statistics. It is generally the poor and ill-educated whose peace and security are torn and smashed by their criminal neighbors. It is also the case that most people who work in the criminal-justice industry—who are the main customers for modern penological thought—meet lawbreakers after they have been arrested, tried, and sentenced. By this time, the burglar who burst terrifyingly into the bedroom by night, the robber who held a knife to the woman's throat, and the drug-stupefied oaf who beat or

hacked a stranger to death have been cleaned up, detoxified, tamed, and taught to dissemble in the hope of release or better conditions. It seems quite wrong that these people should now be harshly used, forced to eat plain fare, sleep on hard beds, and labor all day at dull, wearing tasks. It seems wholly intolerable that they should be put to death. It is very hard to see, in the quietly spoken, well-behaved prisoner in his cell, the fiend out of hell who tortured and killed an elderly pensioner for the pitiful contents of his cash-box.

This is a colossal failure of imagination, responsibility, and vigilance. Unchecked, it brings about an utter perversion of the criminal justice system, which seeks—usually vainly—to rehabilitate the individual criminal for his benefit, rather than to prevent and deter crime for the benefit of all, including potential and actual lawbreakers. It leads to the abandonment of the very idea of punishment or deterrence by the state—though criminals continue to employ these weapons among themselves, knowing them to be highly effective.

In this modern tradition of looking at crime through the wrong end of the telescope, comes this fascinatingly skewed piece of work from James Q. Whitman, Ford Foundation Professor of Comparative and Foreign Law at Yale University. Professor Whitman asks querulously why American punishment is so harsh, compared with the arrangements in France and Germany. Why would anyone want to know the answer to this question in the first place? Should we envy countries where criminals are better treated? Would it not be more sensible to pity them? Prison warders in Germany must knock on the doors of inmates before entering their cells. In France, guards must be careful to address convicts respectfully as “Monsieur.” Both countries refuse to execute murderers, however heinous, unrepentant, or calculating. Both engage in arbitrary mass releases of prisoners through amnesties, which are probably not all that welcome to the victims and neighbors of those thus freed. Professor Whit-

man does not dwell much on the differences in levels of crime and disorder in the three countries he studies, though he does mention sniffily that France recently gave birth to a democratic “law-and-order movement,” which suggests that there is some discontent among the citizenry despite the modish compassion of their political class. Recent anecdotal evidence from the former East Germany suggests that the Federal Republic, too, is no longer a paradise of order despite the dignity it affords to its prisoners. Yet every chapter of this book breathes disapproval of American harshness and a yearning for European continental mildness.

It is a great pity, by the way, that Professor Whitman did not include England in his comparison. English and American criminal justice methods spring from the same 12th-century Common Law origins. Both have jury trial, a practical presumption of innocence, *habeas corpus*, and other guarantees of liberty. But England, which has largely abandoned penal severity in the past few decades, now endures an unchecked pandemic of disorder and wrongdoing, and its prisons are simply unable to cope with the numbers of convicted criminals, despite increasingly desperate efforts to reduce sentences and release inmates early. France and Ger-

were incarcerated in special, often luxurious conditions and treated as equals by their jailers. Whitman suggests that the gentler treatment of French and German prisoners results from a leveling-up process, in which common criminals have gained the privileges once granted to Voltaire and other illustrious prisoners of conscience. The U.S., never having had such elite prisoners, has always seen imprisonment as a deliberately degrading, enslaving experience. Being much given to equality, the American republic has spared nobody from shackles, uniforms, and general degradation.

Well, it is a point of view with the virtue of originality. Whitman largely rejects the most obvious explanation for current European penal laxity, the memory of the Nazi, Fascist, and Vichy eras. This period robbed most of the continental states of any moral legitimacy. The German and French states either engaged in lawless savagery themselves, or they shamefully collaborated with it. On what basis can they now claim enough moral superiority over mere criminals to punish them? No wonder German prison warders must knock before they enter cells. Their trade has a lot to live down. It is a genuine difficulty and one of the many reasons to avoid falling into tyranny or

### FRANCE AND GERMANY HAVE **MILDER PRISONS** PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY **USED TO LOCK UP RESPECTABLE PEOPLE** IN LARGE NUMBERS FOR **HOLDING THE WRONG OPINIONS.**

many stand in the entirely different tradition of civil codes, centralized autocracy, and a long, almost unbroken tendency to imprison people for their politics.

Whitman’s interesting theory—much simplified—is that France and Germany have milder prisons precisely because they used to lock up respectable people in large numbers for holding the wrong opinions. These elite state prisoners

being subjugated by it. But that is not the professor’s position, since he rather prefers the Franco-German methods to American ones.

He acknowledges that American democracy has prevented liberal theorists from softening the penal system there. But he is not pleased by this. One can almost hear his lips pursing as he says, “The punishment system in the United States is more given over to dem-

ocratic politics—which is often to say demagogic politics.” He almost tumbles over into absurdity when he later declares, “When the topic is ‘primitive’ retributivism, the resemblance between fascist and contemporary American punishment practices is too close, and too disturbing, not to be discussed.” He precedes this with a sort of disclaimer: “Let me emphasize that I do not want to say something that only the stupid and ignorant would say: that we have fascism in America.” That would indeed be stupid and ignorant, but then what precisely does he wish to say? He cannot keep away from this theme for long, and within two pages has declared, “We are like the Nazis up to a point. Like the Nazis we too have become committed to the proposition that punishment should be an ‘empfindliches Uebel’—‘something nasty enough to make them hurt.’ But for the Nazis the underlying traditions of *de haut en bas* indulgence remained strong and tended to cabin somewhat the drive toward harshness. There is, by contrast, little that holds us back.” This, by the way is a reference to the bizarre fact that regularized probation was introduced into Germany under Hitler in 1935.

National Socialist Germany had no Bill of Rights, no independent police forces, no juries, no *habeas corpus*, no

free press to expose miscarriages of justice, no presumption of innocence. It employed secret administrative detention and hidden state murder. Where it granted trials, they were parodies of justice. It perverted the law into an instrument of racial persecution and massacre. It made it a capital crime to be born a Jew. What kind of mind could suggest a comparison between Hitler’s lawless apparatus of murder and hatred and the U.S.’s penal system, even with all its acknowledged faults? Hitler’s Germany was harsh to criminals. The modern U.S. is harsh to criminals. But so what? How does this make modern Americans “like the Nazis up to a point”? You might as well suggest that Hitler’s enthusiasm for full employment discredits social democracy, that his hatred of smoking makes California a Nazi state, or that his embrace of the Autobahn taints with the stain of tyranny every nation that builds freeways.

Whitman is actually not a fool. He comes maddeningly close to a truly persuasive explanation for the immense difference between the Anglo-American and the Euroland concepts of criminal justice. But he shuffles round it. He points out that the European system has many repellent aspects, rightly citing the (current) German requirement for all citizens to register with the authorities, and

the sordid practice of “investigative detention” in which arrested suspects are held in danger and squalor for long periods while the authorities try to pressure them into confessions. He observes that penal mildness is often a characteristic of strong states, though he does not explore the possible connection between systematic repression and surveillance and the enforced order they bring about. It is easy to have a society that is tyrannical and orderly or to have one that is free and disorderly. The difficult trick is to create a country in which freedom and order coexist, though this was achieved in England within living memory and much of the U.S. has at times come close to it. The great danger, on the other hand, is to make such a mess of the business that the result is a dreadful combination of repression and disorder, which is the future now facing England and possibly the United States as well.

Punishment does have a role to play, especially in truly free societies. The citizen may choose to obey the acknowledged law of the land or to break it. If he obeys it, the state must leave him alone. But if he breaks it, then it must impose public penalties on him in the hope that he will behave in the future and that others, seeing his fate, will refrain from offending. Yet this is both purposeless and ultimately futile unless the law is based upon an accepted universal moral code that allows the authorities to punish without shame or reluctance and that allows the potential or convicted criminal to recognize that punishment as just. That code, which has for centuries provided an invisible web of civility and self-restraint is failing in all the nations of the once-Christian world. If it is allowed to die, no law, no apparatus of repression, and no system of punishment will be able to save us from chaos. That is the real issue upon which all other parts of this debate depend. ■

*Peter Hitchens is a columnist for the London Mail on Sunday. His most recent book, A Brief History of Crime, was published in May.*



“Stocks plummeted today on forecasts that the sun will rise again and tomorrow will be another day.”

[*Jonathan Edwards: A Life*,  
George M. Marsden, Yale  
University Press, 615 pages]

# Great Awakenings

By Harold O.J. Brown

SINCE THE DEATH of George H. Williams of Harvard in 2001, the title of dean of American church historians has been open. With *Jonathan Edwards*, George Marsden may have won it. Like Professor Marsden today, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had hardly a rival in his own day as pastor, theologian, and, briefly, college president. Unfortunately, he is best remembered among the half-learned general public for one sermon, "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God," and not for his tremendous breadth of learning, his zeal for souls, and for his commitment to persuading, helping, and perhaps even pressuring the people of the little English-speaking colonies on the American frontier to live lives consistent with their profession of faith. Marsden's explanation softens the generally held impression of "Sinners," as part of his general exposition of Edwards's motives as a spiritual leader

Theologians tend to be known for their writings, and although his early death left several major projects unfinished, Jonathan Edwards has written enough to keep a reader occupied for some time. But theologians, like other people, have families, sometimes a wife and children, rivalries, frustrations, hopes, and disappointments. Marsden has rescued Edwards from his undeserved reputation as just a sour Puritan preacher of an angry God and has made him come alive, as it were, before our eyes. We see him in his early ministry, which began with a brief pastorate before he was 20 and continued through the first stirring of what became the Great Awakening, struggles with the beginnings of theological liberalism in Boston, and two menacing wars by

which the French and their Indian allies threatened Northampton, the Massachusetts town on what was then the frontier.

Edwards, like the Congregationalists of New England and the Presbyterians of New York, was Reformed, a disciple of John Calvin. Like Calvin, he is remembered for his rigor, and—again like Calvin—he has too few readers who recognize that his concern was not to dominate his parishioners doctrinally and morally, but to lead, encourage, and perhaps pressure them into living as consistent followers of the Lord they claimed as their own. Although he does not clearly "show the flag" or identify which of Edwards's doctrines he shares and which he does not, it is evident that Professor Marsden understands and sympathizes with the man about whom he writes.

The author vigorously reminds us of the long-forgotten fact that the New Englanders of Edwards's day really were British and not rebellious colonists seething with hostility to the Crown. Speaking of the world into which Edwards was born, Marsden writes, "will make a lot more sense if we think of it as British rather than American ... Edwards lived in a thoroughly pre-Revolutionary British province." Philosophi-

there. Edwards's wife, Sarah, had an intense conversion experience before the general revivals began; Edwards's own early religious experiences, which he regularly recorded in his diaries, were less intense. It is apparent that he could not repudiate the idea that conversion can and should be attended by spiritual highs without also repudiating his and his wife's own spiritual journey.

Several years of Edwards's life were devoted to fostering the best aspects of the revivals, mitigating some of their excesses, and defending them against other clergy whom they made uneasy. All the New England ministers were Calvinists, and all supported the revivals, but the excesses of enthusiasm and the religious frenzy that they occasioned in some quarters caused a gradual erosion of support. This began in Boston and led to the beginnings of "New Light" theology and ultimately to Unitarianism. By half a century after Edwards's death in 1758, that variety of liberal Christianity was to replace orthodox Calvinism throughout much of New England.

Marsden's characterizations of Edwards's efforts to minister to those inspired by the revivals, including those inclined to excessive emotionalism and weird behavior, helps us to see the compassion with which he sought to help

THE AUTHOR REMINDS THAT THE **NEW ENGLANDERS** OF EDWARDS'S DAY  
REALLY **WERE BRITISH** AND **NOT REBELLIOUS COLONISTS** SEETHING WITH  
HOSTILITY TO THE CROWN.

cally and theologically, there were constant interactions with British thinkers—especially with the Scots, who like the New Englanders were Reformed, not Anglican, and whose philosophers promoted the doctrine of "common sense," which was to play such an important role in American theological thinking.

In 1742, two years after John Wesley initiated the Methodist revivals in England, George Whitefield's tour of New England sparked the Great Awakening

people keep to the "narrow way" that "leads to life" (Matthew 7:14). In Catholicism, so deprecated by the Calvinists, the attempt to live truly consistent Christian lives tended to be left to the "religious," i.e., to members of a religious order; the Calvinists, especially in the context of revival, sought to help (or, worse, to make) everyone do so. This effort to make biblical morality the general standard for all church members, however logical it may seem, has led to



## POINT

## COUNTERPOINT

On Oct. 15, Greg Thielmann, a 25-year foreign-service veteran, appeared on "60 Minutes II." Last year, he left his job at the State Department where he was the chief intelligence officer dealing with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Compare Secretary of State Colin Powell's bill of particulars at the UN and the counterclaims of the experts, led by Thielmann, that CBS assembled.

**Powell:** Saddam Hussein is determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb. He is so determined that he's made repeated covert attempts to acquire high-specification aluminum tubes from 11 different countries, even after inspections resumed.

**60 Minutes:** Experts at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the scientists who enriched uranium for American bombs, advised that the tubes were all wrong for a bomb program. At about the same time, Thielmann's office was working on another explanation. It turned out the tubes' dimensions perfectly matched an Iraqi conventional rocket. . . . [Houston] Wood is among the world's authorities on uranium enrichment by centrifuge. He found that the tubes . . . were too heavy, three times too thick, and certain to leak.

**Powell:** There is controversy about what these tubes are for. Most U.S. experts think they are intended to serve as rotors in centrifuges used to enrich uranium.

**60 Minutes:** Do you know anyone in academia, in government, in a foreign country who disagrees with your appraisal, who says, "Yes, these are for nuclear weapons"?

**Wood:** I don't know a single one anywhere.

**Powell:** The two arrows indicate the presence of sure signs that the bunkers are storing chemical munitions. . . . The truck you also see is a signature item; it's a decontamination vehicle in case something goes wrong.

**Thielmann:** My understanding is that these particular vehicles were simply fire trucks that you cannot really describe as being a unique signature.

**Powell:** Every statement I make today is backed up by sources, solid sources. . . . What we're giving you are facts and conclusions based on solid intelligence. I will cite some examples, and these are from human sources.

**60 Minutes:** Thielmann watched with worry as Secretary Powell told the Security Council that human intelligence provided conclusive proof. Thielmann says that many of the human sources were defectors who came forward with an ax to grind.

**Thielmann:** I guess I would say frequently we got bad information. . . . You had the Iraqi National Congress with a clear motive for presenting the worst possible picture of what was happening in Iraq to the American government.

**Powell:** [S]ources inside Iraq indicate that Saddam Hussein retains a covert force of up to a few dozen Scud-variant ballistic missiles.

**Thielmann:** I wondered what he was talking about. We did not have evidence that the Iraqis had those missiles, pure and simple.

**Powell:** [T]he 122-millimeter chemical warheads that the U.N. inspectors found recently . . . could very well be, as has been noted, the tip of a submerged iceberg.

**Steve Allinson,** UN weapons inspector: They were shells that were left over from the Gulf War or prior to the Gulf War from their past program.

the bad reputation generally "enjoyed" by Puritan divines more than have the individual bad actors among them.

Calvin's theology is often interpreted as leaving no room whatsoever for human freedom, an understanding that promoted the move from Calvinism to various forms of liberal Protestantism and even to the rejection of Christianity together with Calvinism. Edwards's *Freedom of the Will* (1754) is an effort to avoid this, strongly emphasizing our ability—and responsibility—to make choices and decisions. Paying attention to *Freedom of the Will* would help inquirers avoid the thought that predestination morally paralyzes them.

The life and work of Jonathan Edwards is almost certain to raise uncomfortable thoughts. Non-Christians readers may be depressed at having so much Christianity, and Calvinism at that, thrown at them; Christians can be discomfited by Edwards's constant emphasis on consistency in religion and on honest self-analysis.

One of the unacknowledged pleasures of reviewing is the possibility of finding fault with a work, of telling the reader how it is less than adequate and could have been improved by calling upon some of the reviewer's insights. Professor Marsden's work, on which he seems to have spent a quarter century, is an unattractive target, especially since too much fault-finding on the part of the reviewer may force him, in moments of spiritual honesty, to doubt the seriousness of his own profession of faith. ■

*Harold O.J. Brown is Professor of Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, N.C.*

**Subscribe to  
The American  
Conservative**  
Go to [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com)  
or call 1-800-579-6148

# Slander & Its Uses



Here's Liz Smith, the syndicated celebrity gossip columnist and the undisputed *numero uno* of her genre, writing about yours truly recently: "The

phone rang with an anonymous caller who wanted to say that Taki Theodora-copulos is a 'neo-Nazi and anti-Semite' and that I should be ashamed for mentioning his magazine *The American Conservative*. The caller added, 'He has nothing to do with the Conservative Party.'"

Dear, oh dear! Liz has been my friend for close to 30 years and has always reported my shenanigans with humor and a generosity of spirit, but this time she really dropped the ball. An anonymous caller? Puh-leez! Just for starters, Liz's calls are screened, and I think it would have been easier to get through to Ben Bradlee during Watergate than Liz Smith. Second of all, since when does as experienced a columnist—over 50 years in the business—repeat allegations from an anonymous caller? Would my buddy Liz have published charges of child molestation or serial murders? What then? Would the fuzz come after me? After all, an anonymous caller can say anything. That is why anonymous calls remain mostly anonymous and unprintable.

What I suspect is that Liz received a call from above and is protecting the caller. Who is the vicious Mr. Big? Fools might try to reason; wise men never try. Like anonymous hate mail, one doesn't give it a second's thought—until one sees it in a friend's respected syndicated column, that is.

What I truly suspect happened is that we, *The American Conservative*, are doing something right. Our stance has been vindicated: in one year we have become the heart and soul of what conservatism is all about. Ergo the cheapest

of debating tricks, writing (in this case calling) *ex cathedra*: I assert, therefore it is. Vladimir Nabokov called such stuff *poshlost*, "corny trash, vulgar clichés, Philistinism in all its phases, imitations of imitations." I call it a pathetic attempt to discredit a small magazine that got it right all along, an abuse of anti-anti-Semitism, and an oft-tried wolf cry.

Charges of anti-Semitism, like mud, tend to stick, and that was the purpose of the slander. What brought it on? That's an easy one. My stance for the right of Palestinians to resist occupation, and the fact that America's support of Ariel Sharon's brutal policies has subordinated American interests and values to the vagaries of militant Zionism. Having said that, I have also insisted in print that, in its attitude toward Jews, the Muslim world today resembles Germany of the 1930s—a time of state-sponsored hate and caricatures of a people based solely on their religion.

Coincidentally, the Liz Smith item appeared the same time Gregg Easterbrook got into trouble over his criticism of Miramax and its parent company Disney for seeking profit by wallowing in gore. (This is handled elsewhere in the magazine.) What I did agree with in Easterbrook's writing was the following: "Recent European history alone ought to cause Jewish executives to experience second thoughts about glorifying the killing of the helpless as a fun lifestyle choice." Actually I thought this passage philo-Semitic, certainly not anti-Semitic. If anything historic applies to present Israeli policies, it is the fact that people

who have suffered like the Jews have should know better. But then, as Bill Buckley has written, "minority exertions on foreign policy tend to have extortional effects." In other words, our friends the neocons are playing hardball with anyone who has the slightest doubt that Sharon is the Second Coming. Here is Bill again: "There are inherited distinctive immunities about Israel and the Jews..." I agree, but depriving people of the right to equality and freedom and keeping them under occupation is hardly a democratic act.

But back to anti-Semitism. I don't know many people who judge ethnic or religious groups as displaying fixed behavior. Sure, there are jokes galore, especially about Jews, mostly told by Jews, and they are very funny indeed. After all, when the joking has to stop, totalitarianism starts. Those who use anti-Semitism as a club for the apostomasis of their political opponents are the very people whom the ADL should go after. Abusing anti-Semitism is the order of the day, thanks to the neocon creed of taking no prisoners. (If any of them had served in the armed forces perhaps they'd understand that taking prisoners is as honorable a duty as resisting the enemy.) Here's Ran HaCohen, a teacher in Tel Aviv and a writer in *Yedioth Achronot*, on the abuse of anti-Semitism: "Nowadays, an orthodox Jew can run for the most powerful office on earth. A Jew can be the mayor of Amsterdam in 'anti-semitic' Holland, a minister in 'anti-semitic' Britain, a leading intellectual in 'anti-semitic' France, a president of 'anti-semitic' Switzerland, or an industrial tycoon in 'anti-semitic' Russia. A converted Jew is even mentioned as a possible successor to the Holy See." I hope no one rings Liz about the last one. ■